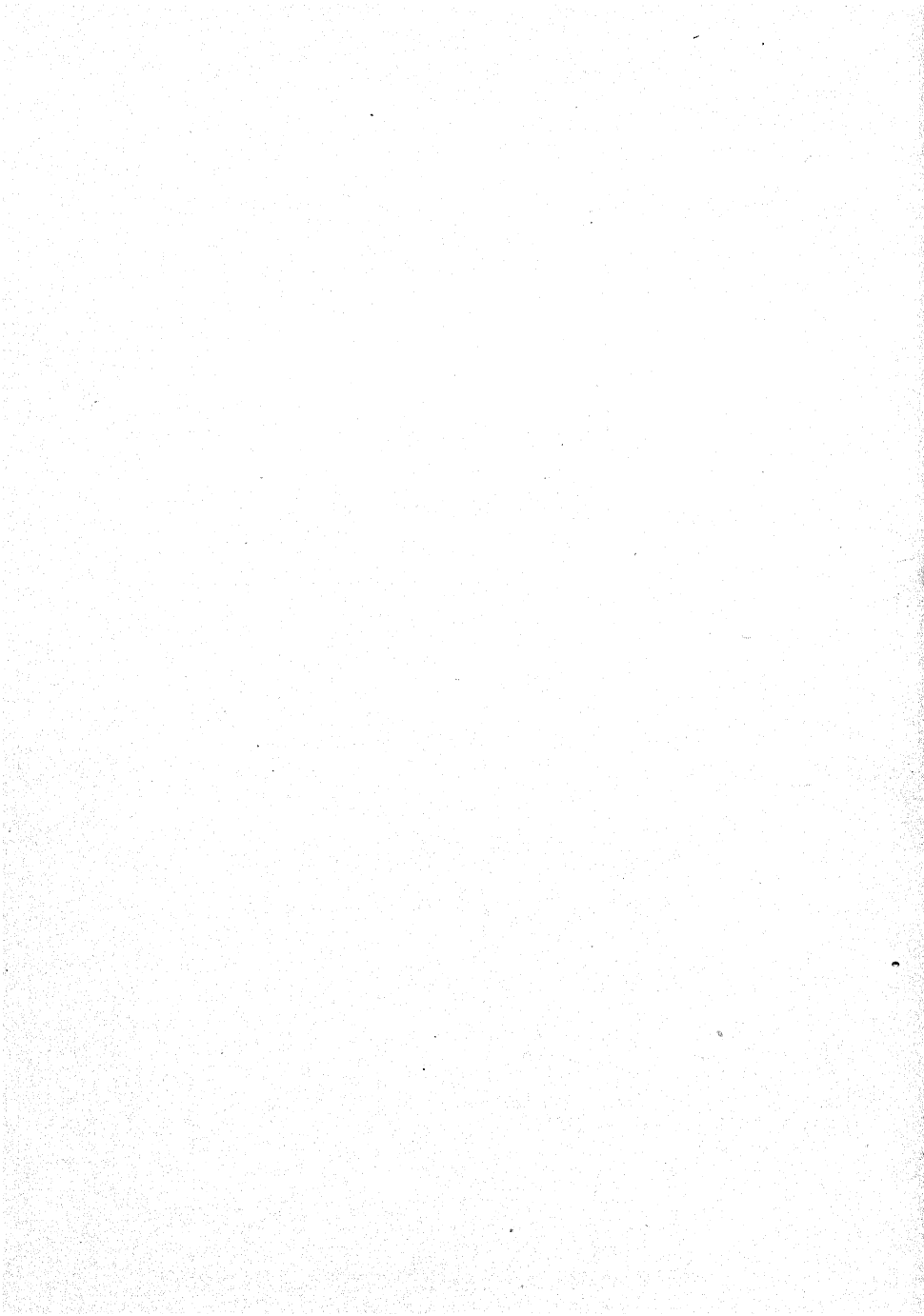


## THE SAMARITANS



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*By*

ANTON GROSS

*Author of "The Zoned Man"*



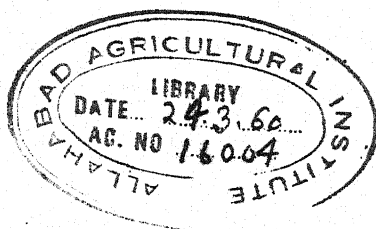
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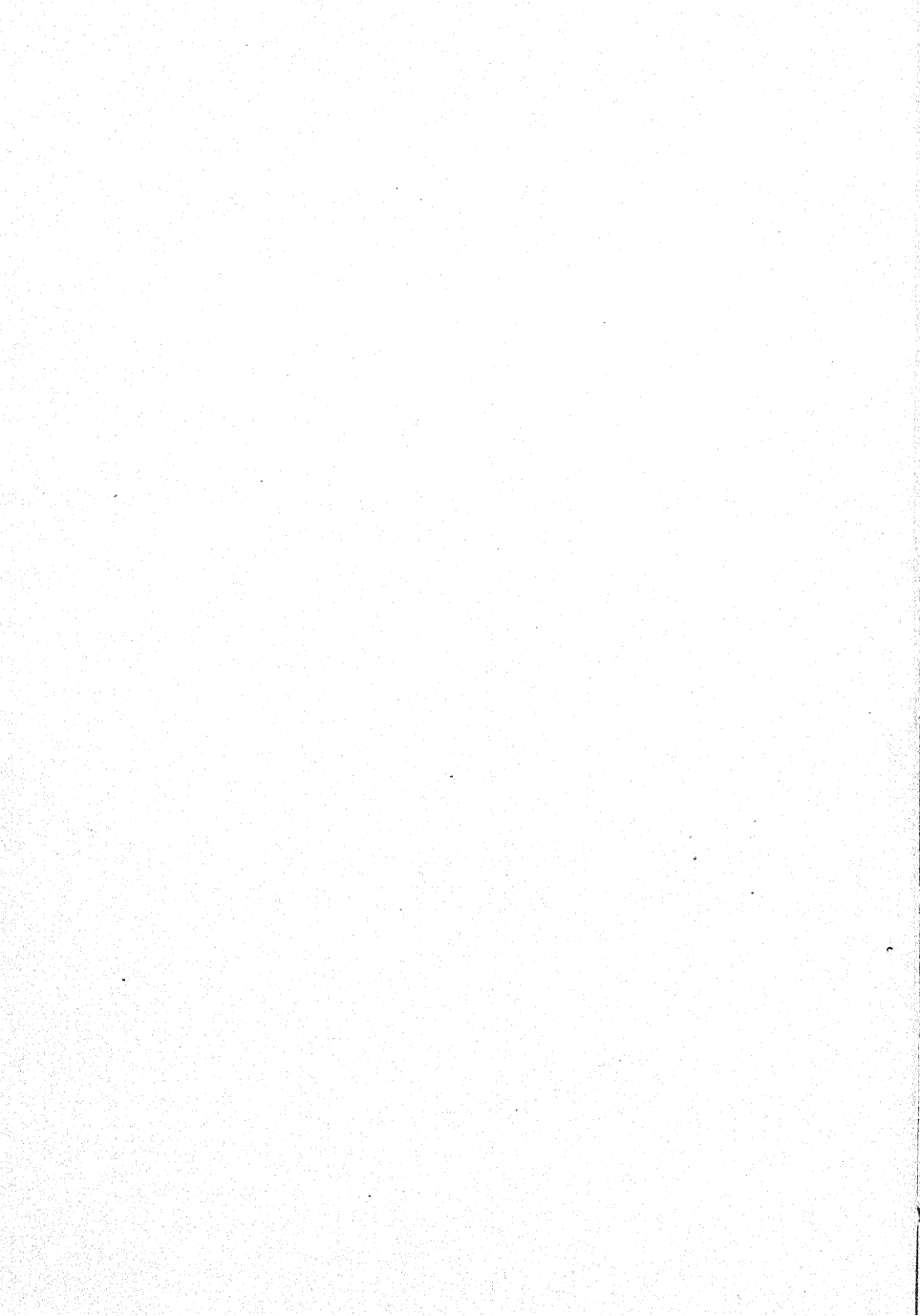


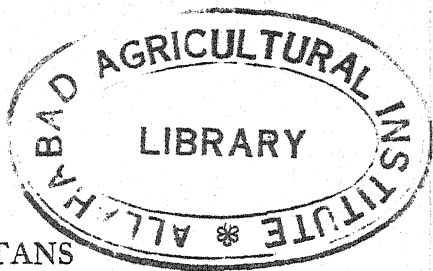


## LEADING CHARACTERS

MONFORT .....	<i>A Humanist</i>
ALMA .....	<i>A Victim of Circumstances</i>
CLYDE .....	<i>A Philosophic Pessimist</i>
BENSON .....	<i>Competent and Jovial</i>
MAY BARRY .....	<i>A Sentimental Social Uplifter</i>
JEAN FIELD .....	<i>Sensible</i>
MOBERT .....	<i>A Man Who Acted Against Himself</i>
ROBBLES .....	<i>A Low Character</i>







## THE SAMARITANS

### I.

The night over Seattle was clear and crisp. The people in the street were moving about fast, their overcoats drawn about them. In the lower part of King street a man and a woman stood in a dark store entrance. The man, brawny and big-faced, glowered at his companion.

"You must do it," he insisted.

"I'll never do it," she protested.

He grasped her arm and squeezed it hard. "You've got to."

She wrenched her self free. "You can't drive me like this!"

"I'll make you do it."

"I can't, I will not. I'll die before I follow such a life."

She was about twenty-four years of age, blonde, blue-eyed, and attractive.

The man grinned nervously. "Come, now, Alma. You know I love you —" and he attempted to draw her to him.

"Don't talk to me of love, you beast."

"Don't be silly. Didn't I always treat you right? We're in a pinch just now and it's up to you to help me. When I get on my feet everything will be all right again."

The woman was stunned. "My God — if you talk like that again I'll scream."

He quickly renewed his grip on her arm and shook a bony fist in her frightened face. "If you make a scene here I'll choke you. You think you can do what you like, eh? Well, we'll see. Come on —"

A passerby stopped, then sought cover behind a telephone pole. He could tell by the strain in the woman's voice that she was in distress. He was too intelligent to be a mere curiosity-seeker. He listened intently to the wrangling couple, deeply concerned. His name was Monfort.

The couple walked up the street a little way and went into a hotel.

For a moment Monfort stared at the hotel door. He was troubled. Why shouldn't he save the woman? He could do it. But apparently he reasoned against his will. He started to walk away. After a few steps he stopped and looked hard at the hotel door again. He had caught but a glimpse of the woman yet her face stirred, haunted him. "Why shouldn't I save her?" he questioned again. It took him a while before he decided to go on, and even then he hesitated. The woman, that stranger who was destined to play a vital part in his life, had filled him with an emotion that for a moment overcame his reasoning. Finally he noted the name of the hotel and walked away, muttering to himself that he was through with the job of saving unfortunate souls.

## II.

The following day, in his mansion in the Fauntleroy Woods, Monfort was still thinking about the woman he had seen on King street. He related the incident to his bosom friends, Benson and Clyde, and while there was feeling in his words he still held fast to his resolution. "I am through with sentimental work. Through for good."

"How come?" queried Clyde. "Disappointed again?"

"Almost every day something turns up to discourage me. You remember that pickpocket — Joe? Six months ago I hired an able lawyer to defend him. Yesterday he was caught again."

"A wise man will learn," remarked Clyde with his usual

pessimism. Clyde had a clear but cold, practical mind. He called Monfort's attention to a picture in the morning paper. "Here is another of those liberated birds of yours coming back to its cage. You remember him?"

Monfort gave a start. "That's the fellow who forged my signature for three thousand dollars. He told me such a hard-luck story, I let him go — on his word not to repeat the offense. What is wrong with him now?"

"Well, he kept his word in a way. He didn't forge a check. He cracked a safe instead! Monfort, you can do great things with your money, — why waste it on trash?"

"You are right," Monfort agreed. "Personally I could never see myself as a mender of broken dishes. It was May Barry that dragged me into my philanthropic venture. I am through for good."

"I can readily imagine what May Barry will say to that," said Benson with a twinkle. "She will look sad; she will plead with mist in her eyes. You will turn to us and say, 'It's a shame to see the poor and the needy suffer. Let's go on with the rescue. Ah — ah!' " Two peculiarities about Benson were his occasional outburst of odd humor and his sandy mustache which turned up at the left-hand corner and down at the other.

While Benson laughed, Clyde grinned.

"This is no time for jokes," said Monfort seriously. "Here we are, three supposedly wise fellows, laughing like clowns. I admit as a relief worker I have wasted money, but not my time."

"If this is no time for jokes, why should it be time for paradoxes?" asked Clyde. "If you have money you can buy time and do what you please with it."

"You are not going to pull me into discussion just now. I am not in the mood," Monfort replied. "Anyway, with Benson as referee, you and I start to chop logic from opposite points and wind up by agreeing. I have a plan in mind and I want you both to tell me what you think of it."

In my years of philanthropic work I have learned that to help with charity those who have fallen by the wayside may relieve them for the time being but not permanently. Man is swayed by economic forces, and a sound, scientific way to help him is to improve the conditions that make him go under. Is that right?"

While Benson and Clyde agreed they looked at him thoughtfully. They knew by his creased brows he had something important on his mind.

Monfort paced the floor a full minute before he spoke again, and then more as if to himself. "If the commodities of life were in abundance and within the reach of everybody, I am convinced man would work marvels!" He stopped pacing the floor and almost stared at his friends. "We are going to start an emporium in Seattle and we will sell all kinds of goods at production prices!"

"Sell at production prices!" Benson was amazed.

"What a powerful idea!" exclaimed Clyde, quickly grasping Monfort's plan. "And this emporium will sell everything?"

"Clothing, furniture, hardware, groceries — everything we can think of."

"And at no profit?" queried Benson, still astonished.

"That's right. Of course, the whole scheme is an experiment with human nature, but I know it will work. I feel that if commodities were sold at a low price a great change would come to the people of Seattle."

"But this experiment — won't it deal a blow at your pocketbook?" asked Benson.

"Why look at it that way? Others get their fun piling up a fortune; I get mine by spending it."

Clyde had to get up and walk around the large living room. One thought after another raced through his mind. "If this plan is allowed to function it will be a sensation," he said to himself. He turned to Monfort. "You have the means and ability to put this idea through," but he added

warningly, "Provided nothing stands in your way. Don't forget, there are more foxes and tigers among men than in the jungles."

"I have the same fear myself, to some extent. But I have confidence in people. Our project is for their interest and if they can see it in that light they will be with us and nothing can stop us."

The three men began to outline the project, Monfort initiating, Benson suggesting, and Clyde continually pacing the floor and offering pessimistic advice. They had scarcely begun when Miss Barry's automobile came buzzing up the driveway and stopped in front of the mansion.

Clyde hastily cast a dark glance at his friends. "There is trouble for you already in the form of a woman! If the news reaches her, this great project will be blasted before its foundations are laid."

May Barry was ushered in by the Filipino servant. She might have been twenty-four or five years of age; wore a grey tailored suit; was tall, vivacious, and refined. She hailed the three friends in a gay voice and met them with a smile that brushed up their thought-absorbed faces. The men were now on their feet, and promptly but awkwardly, like people partly conscious of what they are doing, welcomed her.

She peered at them and said playfully, "Oh, you have been thinking. Mr. Benson looks like this, Mr. Clyde like that, and Mr. Monfort so." In her polished way she imitated their thoughtful looks.

"Well," said Benson jovially, "we don't look so bad then. Won't you join us, Miss Barry?"

"No, thanks. I must be going. I just want a few words with Mr. Monfort." And she looked seriously at him as if she had important news to convey. "Can you spare a few moments?"

He escorted her to the terrace that overlooked the dark

blue waters of Puget Sound and a vista of pine-clad hills that were emerald green in the morning air.

They sat on a bench, Monfort waiting for her to speak. Her serious look had faded away and her lips were soft and smiling, "I love you," she told him.

"That is the best news. But you looked so taken up a while ago —"

"Oh, I was only making believe. I didn't want your friends to know why I came."

"I am glad you did. You set them guessing — a good thing for them."

May Barry laughed. "Do they tease you for paying attention to me? What an interesting combination you three are! I would never tire in your company. But why were you so thoughtful? Something happened?"

"No —"

"What did you do last night?"

The King street affair flashed in his mind. He said feelingly, "Last night I saw a woman in distress."

"Dear me!" May exclaimed. "That is why you looked so upset. You must tell me."

"We were not thinking about her. We were working on a new project."

"To save the woman? You are exciting my curiosity."

To avoid embarrassing questions Monfort remarked that, as they had but a few moments together he would sooner talk about his love for her than anything else.

"But we must not let our work of mercy suffer. It does one good to lend a helping hand."

Monfort got up as if to speak with more deliberation. "One thing I deeply admire in you is your relief work. Only a fine spirit can carry on the way you do. To be frank, May, I am convinced I do not fit in that kind of social activity. The more I think it over the more I feel myself drawn into other directions, in entirely different fields."



May was stunned. "Herbert, what do you mean? A noble soul like you — how can you?"

"I don't know. We can't always understand why we do one thing and not another. I dimly know that my chance wealth was thrown at me for some other purpose than charity."

She studied him. "I don't understand what you mean."

His eyes glowed with vision and he spoke in a firm voice. "Not long before you were born Seattle was but a town. Now it is a marvel of buildings and is throbbing with life. The spirit of growth has driven man to great achievement. My plan — " He stopped to reshape his words. "There must be other ways by which one could contribute to her greatness."

"What is the nature of your plan?"

"The plan is yet too hazy in my mind to talk about it. That is why I feel the necessity of withdrawing from charity work. I must have time to myself to think."

She kept studying him with growing apprehension. "Is it possible you are tired of cooperating with me?" May Barry, member of a wealthy Seattle family, had for the past few years given up social life to devote her time to charity. "We were happy in our work. I thought nothing could take you away from it. Every time you brought a little sunshine to some poor family you felt so glad — "

"I shall cooperate with you both financially and in spirit."

"But your personality — it means so much to them."

He drew closer to her and said softly, "Whatever course I may take, my love for you will always be the same."

"We should not even allow ourselves to think that our love can be weakened. But we should tell everything to each other. You spoke of a woman in distress, of a plan to save her, of a scheme to enrich Seattle. Then you said you did not understand yourself. Are you not trying to hide things from me?"

Monfort made another effort to switch the conversation.

"You know how men are. When in love they want to forget everything else."

She smiled wistfully. "Let me tell you something about women, too. If you have a secret never tantalize her with it. If you don't tell me what you are up to I'll be haunted with all sorts of questions. And I'll have good reason to believe you don't love me anymore."

He described the scene of the blue-eyed woman in distress.

"How terrible!" cried May, upset. "Why didn't you do something?"

"I knew it would hurt you. That is why I didn't want to tell you."

"I know, dear. I should not have been too insistent." She gazed at the vista of green woods and blue water. Many times before they had looked at that scene together, their hearts beating in unison. When she turned to him, her face was radiant.

He drew her to him. "You must always look like that — you must always smile."

"You are never out of my mind, Herbert. This morning I left home to do some shopping for the Kelly widow and her four ragged children, and before I knew it I was at your door." She looked at her wrist-watch and rose immediately. "How time flies when we're together!" She left in a hurry.

Monfort rejoined his friends in high spirits, but affected seriousness. "Relief work — relief work! I wasted an hour of valuable time talking about it with her."

Clyde looked at him intently, then, turning to Benson, said, "I fear we are drifting on a capricious sea."

Humorous Benson flipped back, "And our captain is drifting from his course."

Monfort had to smile. "All the more reason my mates should keep a sharp look-out."

They went back to their project, and before the day was up they had mapped out an amazing enterprise. An idea of it may be gathered from the fact that they had decided on

either buying or building a large building in the heart of Seattle and purchasing two steamers to transport goods from eastern ports.

### III.

It was now spring.

Five months ago two adjacent large buildings had been purchased at one stroke. Soon the interiors of these structures began humming with activity, undergoing reconstruction. The major part of the work centered between the two buildings, the purpose being to convert the two main floors into one.

Alterations completed, truck loads of all kinds of goods began to pour in, and before long the people of Seattle became aware that a concern of unparalleled size was rising in their midst. The whole city talked about it, and the newspapers took it up and wrote spirited articles. The following paragraph was a typical one:

Our progressive city salutes Mr. Monfort. More than anyone else, he shows the spirit of this rapidly growing northwestern metropolis. A man of vision, he goes ahead fearlessly. The giant concern he is about to open stands as a monument to his conviction and courage. Give us more men like Monfort —.

On the opening day The Samaritan created nothing less than a furore. The people crowded the place to congestion. They were amazed at the prices. Hats, shoes, suits, all made of good material, sold cheaper than anywhere else. In the hardware, furniture, grocery, notion, music departments everything sold at bargain prices. There was only one logical explanation: the overture sale.

Two weeks later The Samaritan was still jammed with customers. The news had spread like a flame. The Samaritan seemed the only place where people cared to buy.

Other stores began to feel the effect seriously. Cohen and McMan, owners of the store opposite The Samaritan, tried to divert the crowd to their place by slashing prices and by showy window displays. Their attempt failed. Yet they, or at least McMan, did not worry about it.

"You will see, Cohen, that it will turn out just as I am telling you," he said to his partner. "When prices begin to go up at The Samaritan, part of the people now buying there will drift our way. I can only see good results for us."

"Surely he can't keep it up," Cohen agreed. "If he did he would go broke — a good thing for him."

"But, Cohen, that's out of the question. He can't keep it up."

Cohen eyed his partner through his round, horn-rimmed glasses. "I know he can't, but if he did — well?"

"But that's out of the question, I tell you."

"But suppose he did, what then?"

McMan laughed uneasily.

"Well," said Cohen, "we would go broke. There — look —" They turned their attention to the surging mob of people. "Look at them, the way they stare in The Samaritan windows. Don't they know that goods are goods?"

Three months later The Samaritan still had the same low prices and streams of people still poured in and out. From an elevated gallery over-looking the main floor, the first thing that arrested your attention was a moving confusion of people. On closer observance you began to see formation in the ever-moving mass. Then you became aware that the scene ranged into files, squares, circles, that it fitted itself to the shape of counters and departments.

Popular as this concern was, the people were unable to account for the unusual way in which it carried on business.

Whenever Monfort visited The Samaritan he drew the attention of the crowd. A trifle larger than the average man, robust and energetic, he could easily have passed for an

athlete. He was thrilled by the way things were shaping. Before many days, however, his presence attracted too much attention to suit him. As an intellectual man he preferred quiet, where he could give himself to reflection. He spent considerable time walking the streets, observing and philosophizing. Lately he had noticed, especially in the outskirts, that many houses had improved appearances: they were freshly painted and the lawns and gardens about them were well kept. He was also struck by the unusual cheerful spirit of the residents. Not infrequently children caught up with him, showed him their playthings, and told him that their parents had purchased them at his place. And grown-ups never lost an opportunity to praise The Samaritan. One lady, to cite an instance, explained to him why The Samaritan was a blessing to her family. Her elder son had finished high school a year ago: she wanted to send him to the university but she could not see her way through; while her sixteen-year old daughter, who was talented at the piano, had to be discouraged from a musical career for the same reason. Now, thanks to the reduction in her household expenses, her son was at college and her daughter was realizing her musical ambition.

#### IV.

Five months after the inauguration of The Samaritan, Seattle woke up to find its commercial and social stability thrown out of balance. Prosperity flourished side by side with bankruptcy. Business in many stores had crumbled yet there seemed to be more people in the streets than ever, many houses were under construction, and the theatres and other places of diversion were doing a good business.

As a whole, however, Seattle enjoyed better times than before the advent of The Samaritan. Monfort, buying heavily from local manufacturers, kept its industries busy, and work was plentiful.

But since the ones to suffer were the merchants, the pillars of the city, Monfort was bound to run into a snag. An organization named The Public League was formed for the purpose of fighting The Samaritan. Circulars appealing to the public not to patronize "Concerns aiming to undermine the welfare of our city" were freely distributed; and a large poster, with alarming meaning, appeared in conspicuous places. The upper half of the poster showed a panorama of Seattle. The city, resting on seven legendary hills, was lit up by a bright sun, while the heart of the city, teeming with many sky-scrapers, was festooned and all aglitter. The lower half of the poster also showed a panorama of the city, but this was a cheerless one. The sweep of houses over the legendary seven hills was dull, as if screened by a dreary fog, and the nest of skyscrapers was crumbling and forlorn. Only one building, a double structure on Second Avenue, towered grimly in the midst of desolation. The poster was not worded. Its meaning was clear enough, yet it did not create the expected results. In fact, most people studied it and walked away in astonishment.

The community, unable to understand the motive behind The Samaritan, advanced a variety of opinions. Ideas, logical and legendary, floated about. The clergy discussed the situation freely and quoted from Scripture to show that the hand of God was operating through The Samaritan. Only the blind infidels, they said, failed to see it. The masses claimed that a new leaf had turned in the order of things, that common sense had risen above decadent commercialism. The Public League painted Monfort as a shrewd speculator and politician who squandered millions to harvest billions, who maneuvered to get control of the city business so he could eventually plant an iron hill on Seattle and say: "Either you pay my price or starve."

The three friends were pleased with their thriving enterprise. Benson and Clyde spent a good deal of their time in The Samaritan, working for its success. Meanwhile, the

pessimist had come under the spell of a brunette, a member of The Samaritan orchestra, and Benson had fallen in love with a red-haired cashier, Jean Field.

On the other hand, Monfort's romance was not doing well.

The climax came one day when May Barry entered his office in an ugly mood. "Good morning," she said coldly, with an obstinate look in her eyes.

He rose from his seat with a smile.

"You may keep your seat," she said curtly. "I am not here to take any of your time."

He was not surprised. Lately a strange aloofness had become more pronounced in her. He remained calm, as he always did when in a predicament, and remarked, "You look charming even when frowning."

"Your flattery sounds like mockery to me."

He approached her feelingly. "How can I be mocking? One cannot speak from his heart and mock at the same time."

She drew away.

He made an effort to put his arm around her. "If I hold you close to me you will understand me better."

"I don't want to be close to people who are not honest with me. Even now you are trying to deceive me, hiding your thoughts from me."

"Don't say that."

"I have reason to say it. Once you told me you had a dream that would enrich Seattle, and in the same breath you said you did not understand yourself. You started The Samaritan. You upset things in the city. My parents hate me because I cared for you; my friends reproach me, and all you think fit to say is that I am good looking."

"You are distorting my meaning, my intentions?"

"Then what do you keep up this horrid institution for?" she asked bluntly.

He had never seen her in such a state of mind. "I will explain." He induced her to sit down. For the first time

since she had come in she allowed her eyes to rest upon him, but they were restless eyes, ready to flare up. "Listen, dear May —" He paused, bewildered by her blistering look. "I — I — oh, what's the use! I can't talk to you now —"

She sprang up quickly, and made for the door. As quickly he blocked her way. "What I mean is, I can't talk to you when you are so upset. You cripple my tongue. But don't let us argue like this. Life is too short. Let us forgive whatever stands against us."

Despite her bitterness, she softened somewhat. "I will forgive you when you speak openly. You talk to me as if I were a woman of the fifteenth century. Why not come out in the open and say: 'May, you are a woman. You should talk of love, books, and home life: business is for men.'"

"The future may be able to say that, but I can't say it as long as men are blunderers. I speak openly. What mystery does The Samaritan conceal? None. Its heart is open to everyone alike. If at first we did not make ourselves clear to you or anyone else it was because we did not want our plans to be known at the time. Yet it was you who inspired in me the dream of The Samaritan."

"I — I — inspired you to do this?" She shrank away almost frightened. "I detest The Samaritan!"

He felt as if stabbed. "You, too. You who have left nothing unturned to help others — you do not understand?"

"I do understand. You want to bring ruin to our city."

"These can't be your words: they are too cruel. Isn't there more happiness in Seattle now than ever before?"

"The stores are suffering everywhere, the local manufacturers are threatening to close their doors to you, the administration is planning action against The Samaritan. Does that suggest happiness?"

"But they are a limited few. If the many are benefited, what more can you want? Personally, I do not take pride in their difficulties; neither should they be so selfish about it. I must say your reasoning is weak. If a hay-maker suffers



by a rain, his neighbors may profit by it. But don't let's argue. Eventually things will adjust themselves for the interest of our community. I can only repeat that The Samaritan is the spiritual child of our affection."

"I hate The Samaritan," she repeated hotly.

"I know. You have been prejudiced against me. But, even then — oh, May, don't you understand? Your soul is embodied in our child. The Samaritan is all you in spirit."

"The way you talk, you frighten me."

"You, an admirer of the good, of the ideal — you surprise me, to say the least. Are you frightened because your friends are against me, or are you frightened by the principles The Samaritan stands for? You must weigh these questions before answering. They concern our very life."

She did not have to ponder long to make up her mind. "If The Samaritan is our spiritual child, destroy it, for it has consumed my love for you."

Monfort stood up, speechless, crushed by her look, by her words. He opened his mouth, but his voice failed him. All he could do was to stare vacantly at her but, slowly the pain in his eyes cleared. "You and The Samaritan are the closest things to my heart," he said gravely.

"I told you what I think."

"I have put my soul in The Samaritan. It stands for what is best in me. If you leave me now you will inflict on me a wound that time will never heal."

But May Barry had made up her mind. She swung on her heel. "Good-bye," she snapped, and walked out.

Monfort staggered to his swivel chair. So rapidly had the quarrel developed, it seemed like a nightmare.

Later, when Clyde entered his office, Monfort was still brooding.

The pessimist, knowing how a man is apt to feel in such circumstances, began tactfully to question him. "Do you know the remedy?" he asked.

Monfort lifted his heavy eyes to Clyde. "No," he stammered.

"Don't you know what steps to take right now?"

"Why — no," Monfort muttered.

"Suppose you were sailing toward a far-off goal and an island blocked your course, what would you do?"

Monfort looked at him vaguely. "Why do you ask — did she say anything to you?"

"Pardon me, Monfort, for saying this. She is the type of woman that would lead you by the nose if she could. But come, come, answer. Would you sail around the island or not?"

Monfort looked at Clyde and smiled with difficulty. "I don't know what you mean?"

"I lack words to convey my feeling just now. I want to tell you how sorry I am for you, and in the same breath I want to temper you to the strength of steel against anyone who dares raise an accusing hand at The Samaritan."

"You are speaking my mind, Clyde, but not my sentiments. I hate to see a good girl like May cheapening herself."

"I admit she is good in part, but how would you judge her as a whole?"

Just then Benson came in and learned what had happened. The three friends went over the situation. Even Benson and Clyde were baffled by May Barry's attitude: it seemed incompatible with her character. They believed that when The Samaritan was in full swing and its good work materialized she would give her approbation.

"I can just about see what she will do," said Benson, trying to inject some humor into the discussion. "Before long she will come to you like a beggar. She will be down-cast. You will be firm. She will weep on your shoulder and ask you to pity her. And mark what I tell you! you'll be sentimental before you'll know it. Ah — ah — ah!"

Monfort started to smile, only to frown, "She will never do that. She hates The Samaritan too much."

## V.

Events were now moving fast in the Evergreen City. A group of well-dressed men called on Monfort. Their vigorous hand-shake, ready smile, and winning manners showed that they were efficient business men. But they were also in sympathy with The Samaritan and praised Monfort for what he was doing. They expressed their desire to enter partnership with him in his altruistic work.

In moments of deep consideration, as this occasion called for, Monfort invariably turned calm so as to let his unhampered mind direct him. On this occasion, however, his face lit up and he talked freely. He was glad to hear that they were in favor of The Samaritan. For the present, however, he intended to shoulder the project alone. Leaning back in his chair, he pondered a moment, and then said, "I would like to make a suggestion which I am sure will appeal to you, and at the same time will work for the good of the community."

They all nodded. "We'll be glad to hear it."

"Why don't all of you get together and start another Samaritan?"

The suggestion left them cold. On the surface his advice seemed all right, they replied, but it did not appear practical. It entailed unnecessary building and operating expenses, etc., etc.

A few days later he was visited by another group of men. This group wanted to buy him out, paying face value plus a hundred thousand dollars. When Monfort told them The Samaritan was not for sale, they looked hard at him and came right out of hiding. "So far we have tried to deal peacefully with you. But let us warn you that if peaceful methods are not enough we will find other methods to make you sell your damned business." They walked out in a body.

Pessimistic Clyde had anticipated something like that. So had Monfort. But Monfort was an optimist and was

confident that in the end a good deed will win out. And there were indications that lent strength to his confidence. Soap-box orators sprang up everywhere, and prophets loudly raised their voices in drawing-rooms and clubs. The Samaritan was the leading topic of discussion. The people were as stirred by it as they would have been by a presidential campaign.

## VI.

There was one man who, since the eventful opening of The Samaritan, had done much thinking. One afternoon this man called at the house in Fauntleroy Woods. The three friends were in the living room smoking their pipes and discussing the latest developments when the Filipino servant announced that a man outside wished to see Monfort.

"Show him in, Tivo," ordered his master.

"But, Sir, he have boots."

"Oh, I understand. Tell him The Samaritan has plenty boots just now. And, too, tell him that this is no place for business."

"He no sell boots, Sir. He have them on. He have also corduroy pants and flannel shirt, too."

"I see, you mean he is a working man?"

"Yes, Sir; and he have a beard long one foot."

Monfort laughed. "Tivo, you must be reading the newspapers too closely. Lately you are always afraid something bad is going to happen. Show the man in."

Obviously he was an outdoor man, perhaps a woodsman or a surveyor. Though of medium size, his high boots and the foot-long beard that dangled over his chest gave him a bulky, strong appearance. He had an aquiline nose and dark eyes which were screened by lightly stained horn-rimmed glasses. He carried a book under his arm.

He was a botanist.

"What can we do for you?" asked Monfort.

As the man began to talk, the book slid from under his arm. He caught it before it reached the floor. He seemed self-conscious and nervous. He explained to Monfort that he had visited his Woods and found in them *endemic beauty*. "But they are in what we botanists call primeval struggle. Firs and hemlocks crowd one another out; useless branches of big trees throw cold shadows over tender saplings. They are at war with themselves."

"Well, now" said Monfort, impressed. "Take a seat. You interest me."

"I suppose," said Clyde, his eyes traveling over the man's forehead and sparse, tidy, curly, black hair, "you are here looking for a job?"

That was the man's object.

He had done botanical work in the San Francisco and Portland Public Parks. He was confident he could bring beauty to Monfort's Woods without marring their virginal charm.

He was hired.

Judging by the way the botanist took to his job he was not going to play havoc with the wild woods. He had been there for weeks and little of his effort was evident. Perhaps most of his time was taken up in planning.

The mansion, built of granite, rested near the top of a hill in the midst of a tree-encircled garden. On a windy day the circular green wall of conifers and alders quivered and broke into fantastic movements. The garden consisted of lawn and low beds of flowers. The artistic touch of the French gardener was readily seen here: he wanted to accentuate the towering beauty of the surrounding woods. The garden looked more like a patch of blooming meadow at the bottom of an emerald valley.

The bearded man planted a large Veronica bush on the lawn some twenty feet back of the building.

The Frenchman was provoked by the sight of it. "*Nom*

*de Dieu*," he said to himself. "That fellow is going to spoil my work." He asked why he had planted that bush there.

"Don't you think it looks all right?" asked the botanist.

"I think it is out of place."

"Oh, I see." The bearded man wiped his perspiring forehead with the red handkerchief that was constantly sticking out of his hip pocket. "Don't you think the deep green of the bush blends well with the lawn — kind of sets it off?"

As the gardener was not ready to agree, the botanist offered him a cigar. "If after a while you still don't like the bush here, I'll be glad to take it away for you."

The Frenchman let him have his way to avoid friction.

Now, when nobody was in sight the botanist hid himself in the Veronica bush and worked on a boring tool — a hand auger. The bush lay on the north side of the mansion. On the east side of the mansion the lawn took an abrupt turn down to the woods. He planted another large bush on this side and toiled in it watchfully and with might.

He operated in the bushes only when the wind blew from the west.

## VII.

One year after the inauguration of The Samaritan Seattle was fast speeding toward a new psychology. The change still lacked the features of maturity, but its tendency was unmistakable. Living expenses being reduced, the people had more time to devote to themselves. On week days it was not uncommon to see the beaches swarming with loungers and to see crowds flocking into amusement houses. Office employees attended art schools, taking up courses for professions or for cultural acquisition. The change most felt, however, was in the intellectual sphere. The spirit of The Samaritan had awakened in them a new conception of human

society. The community felt that the dream of past philosophers and seers was shaping itself.

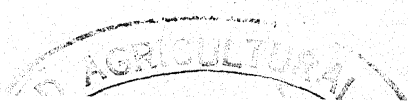
Strengthening their conviction was the fresh rumor that Monfort was making preparation to take over a number of local factories. Seattle looked very much like Athens in the time of Socrates when people gathered in the streets and discussed the future state of mankind.

For better or for worse this situation was badly handicapping the spirit of commercial expansion. If Seattle was to maintain her leadership in the northwest something had to be done quickly.

Monfort's enterprise was now rocking on troubled waters. The local manufacturers had not only refused to sell their plants but had quit selling their goods to him. This did not hurt materially. The two big steamers, Montesor and Midas, sailed fast down through the Panama Canal and to eastern ports. Then manufacturers in the east began to bombard Monfort with telegrams. Montesor, faster than Midas, occasionally loaded at foreign ports. From these ports, too, there came unfriendly telegrams. Worst of all, was the attitude of the local authorities. They accused him of ruthlessly trying to undermine the welfare of the city; they demanded an explanation as to the source of his wealth. This led to the sensational trial known to newspaper readers as The Samaritan Case.

We will follow the trial in its salient details. Patiently we will sit on the benches of Judge Mawr's court and listen to the contending parties.

The court is crowded. The sun, softened by a stationary fog, pours mellow beams into the room. Through the windows looking south we could see, on a clear day, a sweep of buildings below, then Elliot Bay and the Duwanish waterway hemmed in by factories. In the background The Fauntleroy Woods catch our eye, but the light fog screens the view. The factories, the ships on the bay, the buildings look alike: they are sombre forms. The base of Fauntleroy is bloated



out of sight, and only dimly we see its several eminences rising into a lighter mist. They look like dark bluish lumps suspended in the air. Everything is hazy, like the outcome of the trial itself.

Monfort takes the stand. In his tan shoes and grey tweed suit matched with a pale blue tie, he looks more like a merchant than a social economist. Nor does he seem worried. He has a cheerful look, and his clear brown eyes are observant and alert.

Mobert, the prosecuting attorney, digs into his character and history. He often interrupts Monfort. Apparently Monfort is too convincing to please him.

If let alone or if he had been sitting by the fireside among friends, Monfort would have given the same account in the following manner :

"I was born in Boston thirty-eight years ago. I went through high school and at eighteen I entered a seminary and studied theology. Three years later I left the academy. It dawned upon me that theology was not my forte. It dawned upon me that if I could lend a hand towards the improvement of social conditions I would contribute more to a higher morality in the people than I could in any other way. I traveled. I met Benson in Seattle. We set out to prospect together in the fastness of Goat Mountain, northeast of Lake Cle Elum. After a spell of hard luck we found, at the foot of a rocky cliff, a narrow horizontal vein, consisting of tiny quartz pebbles and sand, running toward the heart of the mountain. For a month we pursued the streak, blasting into live rock, panning the fine gravel, daily cleaning some fifty to sixty dollars worth of gold dust and wee nuggets. One day, the tunnel deepened many paces, a blast failed to jar the rock loose; merely cracked it in a few places, and the thick yellow smoke from the explosion oozed in thin ribbons from the cracks. The explosion had worked in the rear. A pocket must have been ahead. We drilled short holes, blasted away, shovelled back the shattered rocks like



two madmen blinded by expectation. When sufficient room was made, Benson thrust his carbyde lamp in and saw that though the roof of the seam ran its usual horizontal course, the floor turned down, describing a caldron-like cavity. The same drift stuff was on top, but at the bottom was another story. Nuggets as big as a robin's egg nestled in quantity beneath the gravel and sand. We cleaned over a hundred thousand dollars from this find. We came to Seattle and after a spell of city life we went back to our mine. Passing the pocket, we again pursued the old vein, the vein-stuff yielding as before. But this no longer satisfied our hundred-thousand-dollar pocket book. We hoped to strike another pocket. We worked on. The seam gradually became smaller and finally it almost disappeared. Only a mere scar remained across the surface of the granite wall. We followed this thread on, Benson working against hope. At length he gave up and returned to Seattle. I remained. I put a claim on the mine, and kept tracking the scar which for a time looked like a piece of dark thread across the grey rock. Then it began to grow larger; gravel and sand reappeared. But I did not pan the drift. I staked my luck on larger game. The time came when a blast worked in the rear, not even cracking the rock near the drilled hole, not a wisp of smoke in sight. I emptied the hole, ran a long tamper through it and sounded. The echo came back as if from a deep cavern. For two days I kept drilling, blasting, widening a passage. Finally when I got to the cavern the sight before me was almost too much for my senses. The cavern was larger than two average rooms put together, and there were huge nuggets piled a yard deep on the floor."

The following day we are in Judge Mawr's court again. We see people crowding everywhere, and we know many are outside. We ask ourselves: Why aren't court houses larger so the public can see drama in the making? Our attention is focussed on Monfort. We always liked the man and since yesterday he seems still closer to us. We say:

"How can a man like that be prosecuted?" We can't help looking hard at Mobert. We dislike him for what he is doing, yet we have a strange, mixed feeling about this man. He is almost as tall and of the same age of Monfort, but is slimmer; his face is not as filled in and as radiant with health. From a little distance his eyes seem to be a mixture of grey and brown, and they are very quick. He wears a brown suit, with a subdued lavender shirt and tie. At times it seems as if we hear him say to Monfort: "The more I think of you the less I think of myself. If I were not legally jacketed I would be by your side. My conscience weeps while my brain sharpens its teeth to crunch you."

Benson is questioned. He corroborates what Monfort said yesterday. We can hardly refrain from laughing as we listen to him. From another his humor would sound flat: from him, it is contagious. Perhaps his laughing grey eyes, his curling lips, and happy-go-lucky face prevent us from frowning at his explosive quibbles. But for the life of us we cannot see any sense in his distorted mustache. If he stopped trimming it for two weeks he would run the risk of being kidnapped by showmen.

Monfort is questioned about his motive regarding The Samaritan. He states that The Samaritan is a self-maintaining institution; that is, the money taken in balances with the expenditure. Does that include the interest on his invested capital? No; what he paid for the two ships, the building, and accessories, as well as the initial stock, is left out of consideration. How long does he intend to run The Samaritan on that basis? Permanently. Moreover he intends to buy or build factories for processing his goods. How much will that undertaking cost? He does not care how much. His object is to bring abundance to the people. He is repeatedly interrupted. He is accused of being a blind follower of foreign theories. He replies that the idea for the enterprise originated entirely in his own mind, and that his motive in starting The Samaritan was to create a medium through

which he could use his wealth in some logical way. But why? Because he is convinced that that is the most human thing to do. He repeats that if he can help society to create in abundance and make available the things necessary for a comfortable life he will assist his fellow men to reach higher physical and moral standards. Moberg retorts that society is doing that now. Monfort answers, with a grin: "True, society produces the necessities, but is unable to buy them back."

Moberg speaks louder and in a sharp tone. If Monfort is the philanthropist he pretends to be why doesn't he give to those in need; why doesn't he support humanitarian institutions? He defends himself by saying that he is guided not by sentiment but by reason. He maintains that he is doing what he thinks is the best thing to do.

The session is over and we feel the strain of it.

The following day there is no trial.

Monfort and his two companions spend the forenoon in Fauntleroy. In the afternoon Benson, heeding the dictates of his heart, primps himself up, drives to The Samaritan, and passes hours talking with the red-haired cashier. Undoubtedly they are in love.

Monfort and Clyde stroll in the Fauntleroy Woods to enjoy the seclusion. They venture in the timber east of the mansion. The wind blows from the west. Suddenly a pungent odor bites at their nostrils. They turn here and there, sniffing the wind. They follow the scent to the spot from which it starts. On the edge of the garden there thrives a large Veronica bush. It has a tumbling shape, and some of its lower branches bend over the kept grass, others trail in the bracken. Under a dying fern, close to the bush, they spy a turbid chemical running down over the mouldy ground and sinking into it.

"What does that mean?" Monfort asked with suspicion.

"Look!" Clyde pointed with a stiff finger. "It comes from this — why that queer bush?"

A thick nasty fluid was dripping from a metal tube hidden in the foliage.

Monfort touched it with the tip of a finger and smelled it. For a second he stared at Clyde. "Do you know what this chemical is? It's *acqua regia* in gold solution." He ran a dry fern stem in the tube. "Points straight to my gold chamber. (Monfort had a large quantity of nuggets stored in a steel vault underground back of the mansion.) Say, I like the joke. The man has brains."

Clyde cast an eye up at the other bush and laughed in his pessimistic way. "I'll throw a stone at that bush up there. I'll bet you his red handkerchief a fox will jump out."

"That man was never a botanist," agreed Monfort.

"If he is, I need glasses — I'll yank his beard."

They walked toward the bush, talking loudly so as not to surprise him.

The man hastily covered a hole in the ground and with equal haste came out of the thicket with a bucket in his hand. He was obviously embarrassed, but thanks to his bearded face, most of his uneasiness was concealed.

"Yes," he answered to a question, "I am watering it."

Monfort, arms crossed on his breast, took in a general view of the surrounding woods then began to admire the *Veronica* bush. "A perfect idea — perfect."

The botanist grew less tense. He explained why the bush was becoming to the garden. He called Monfort's attention to the tall trees. Clyde made a quick pass at his beard but missed it — the soft hair slipped from his fingers.

"It wouldn't be a bad idea to plant more of these bushes — a perfect idea," continued Monfort. "Tell me, do these plants sink their roots deeply?"

The botanist replied that they did not.

Monfort looked at him with a twinkle in his eyes. "If they did they might grow golden berries."

The man looked straight at Monfort but kept his mouth shut.

"I have lots of gold hidden under here. I wouldn't like roots to suck it."

"Ah! ah! ah!" The man laughed loosely. "I understand what you mean." He turned his head up, opened his mouth wide, and laughed again, his beard swinging in the air like an agitated pendulum. Clyde made a grab, only to miss it again.

The man turned to Clyde and remonstrated. "Sir, you are playing with my beard."

Clyde looked at him narrowly. "If I were a plant expert I'd wear whiskers, too." He seized the base of the bushy hair, slowly and steadily fingered it for a hold, and with a quick jerk stripped the man's face. The would-be-botanist ran. Clyde grabbed him by the coat and held him. "Come, now; the jig is up."

Without his disguise the botanist looked like an office man. "Stealing is not your game or you would not let the gold run into the ground. Make it snappy! The truth is the only thing that will appease us."

Cohen faced Monfort like a man. "The Samaritan has ruined my business, it has broken me. I am filled with bitterness. Every drop of gold I waste from your treasure is sweet to me. I hate you — well?"

Monfort looked at him without anger. "You play wisely. Your game is chess where the prosecution's is pinochle. But you have lost the game. I can regain my gold from the soaked ground. Who helped you?"

"Nobody. You see this hole? Well, it carries the chemical into your gold chamber. The hole that ends in the bush below, drains it out. I did the whole thing myself."

"You may have done it yourself but how did you know I had a gold chamber? Only a few friends knew about it. Who told you?"

"Everybody knows that."

"Listen, Cohen," said Clyde, "you've played the game and lost it. Now come through."

The store man started to argue again. "If I tell you, wouldn't I be a double face."

"If you don't like a double-face why did you wear that beard?" Clyde asked. "Don't dilly-dally; confess."

"Well — it's a lady. Her family and mine were visiting one evening and, like everybody else, we were talking about The Samaritan — it was only natural for her to talk about your gold chamber —"

"Ah. No need mention her name," Monfort interrupted. "That woman darkens every bit of my sunny world."

"You make me feel like a devil," said the Jew gloomily. "I'm telling you — she didn't squeal. She just mentioned it as a fact. A plague upon you if you think bad of that girl."

Monfort was losing his patience. "I like your nerve better than your reasoning. What is good for one may be bad for another."

"Well," persisted Cohen, "the good that girl has done for Seattle —"

Once more Clyde cut him short, this time in an ugly mood. "You play your fiddle well: you should be playing it in Judge Mawr's court. There anything that cries against The Samaritan is music, even if it sounds like hell. Here you are playing to the wrong audience. If you are wise, beat it."

## VIII.

As the trial progressed The Samaritan sympathizers began to lose hope. They distributed small ribbons of white silk inscribed The Samaritan, with a red line running along the four sides, framing the dark blue lettering. A large number of people wore them. This emblem was a mute voice, expressing a common sentiment. A stranger would have thought Seattle was holding a convention.

Came the last day of the trial. Mobert thundered his closing speech, couched in subtle psychology. He barked his words as if mad at something, or at himself.

"The defendant claims he is not governed by sentiment. We certainly don't deny that. A man who so cold-bloodedly attempts to crush the life out of a city by paralyzing its industries, if he has a plan, has not borrowed it from his heart. A man who tramples upon the hopes, ambitions, and integrity of our lovely city has neither sympathy nor feeling for his kind."

He accused Monfort of being a plotter and a usurper of liberty. He read from the constitution as one always does when appealing to the public. He quoted Washington and Lincoln. "Beware," he warned, "of the man who tries to affect kindness: he is a trickster who snares your attention in order to deceive you. Beware of the slick hand that gives: that same hand will plunder and pluck you. The trimmer will decoy his illusive schemes with figments of love and kindness, for these are the things we faithful mortals fall for. Were I to choose, I would sooner bare my naked breast to the sting of the spider than my padded back to the foul hand of the plotter."

Monfort listened to Mobert with amusing interest. At times when the dramatic speaker branded him a trickster he could not help smiling. He thought the district attorney was a polished actor, acting his role with mastery.

What hurt Monfort was not so much Mobert's speech — he knew that the man must act that way. What hurt him was something else. As he turned to the audience: eyes, hard, unfriendly eyes, stared at him from all directions. Those eyes really hurt him.

When the decision to dissolve The Samaritan was made public, part of his sympathizers tore the ribbons from their vestments. They had always had a suspicion, a sort of hidden fear of Monfort, they said.

Monfort offered to sell The Samaritan to the so-called Committee of Public Spirit. When the Committee demurred he said, "The ill-feeling you have created against me has grown mushroom-fashion and is apt to go down equally as

fast when calm reasoning prevails. You had better not feel your victory too keenly."

The Samaritan closed with a bit of drama. A crowd — no longer a shopping crowd — was assembled on the main floor, its attention drawn to the balcony in front of Monfort's office, and it was cheering. Monfort looked down over the gathering and waited for a chance to announce the closing. In the mass of upturned faces he caught sight of a statue-like feminine figure. Her light brown eyes were set on his, her silent lips appealing to him, but Monfort turned his attention to the audience. A man climbed a counter and addressed him. He was the voice of The Samaritan adherents and announced that Monfort had been chosen as their candidate for mayor of the city. For minutes Monfort was unable to speak, so great was the applause.

"Friends," he declared, moved by the honor held out to him, "though I regretfully decline your offer, your motive is fully cherished and appreciated. I have neither the ability nor the ambition for public office. If anything I am an experimenter. The Samaritan must have made that fact clear. Through it I experimented with my wealth and exploited human nature. Man is an engaging subject. He can be dragged down to the teaching of nazism and fascism and he can be inspired to climb to higher social levels. In short, he is responsive. His energy, in whatever direction it is channeled, brings forth fruition. Before the advent of The Samaritan the ambition of the city hinged on material development. Man has created marvels in that sphere. It came to me that the city could also do marvels in the realm of higher things. Therefore I attempted to channel the people's potentiality in that line. My idea was fast becoming a reality. Once the urge for material needs was eased, their spirits bloomed in the realm of culture and things of the mind. You, The Samaritan adherents, have understood me, and therein is my reward."

Thus ended The Samaritan.



Monfort backed into his office until he had disappeared. A few moments later the brown-eyed lady stood at his office door, the look of entreaty still on her face. Monfort stood erect at his desk and met her without ceremony. For a moment she gazed, then her lips began to tremble.

"Tell me, dear Herbert," she faltered, "do you dislike me, do you hate me?"

"If I hated you I might not dislike you." There was determined calm in his manner.

"Please, speak so I can understand you. It seems so long since I have heard your voice."

"No; I don't hate you. I —"

"Then you love me still. Oh, I am so glad. I have cried bitter tears since we met last. 'You have wronged him, you have wronged him,' I have told myself over and over."

Monfort stood firmly, and said, "I have lost faith in you."

"Pity me if I have been weak."

"I both pity and forget you."

"Oh — don't talk like that —"

"You wanted me to talk that way. Our lives are far apart."

"I know — I am beginning to see it."

"If you deliberately trample upon a worm and then come back to nurse him, you may heal his pain but never the scar. I thought the world of you until one day you came to me when I was low in spirit. Your sympathy would have meant much to me; even your impartiality would have done me good. Instead you threw your anger in my face. You bared your mind and what I saw left a scar that time will never heal."

May Barry said to herself, "What a small creature I have been." But she had made up her mind not to weaken now. "What if I have taken sides with you? Haven't I been honest with myself?"

"Of course you have been honest with yourself. You have raised a barrier between us —"

They were interrupted by the sudden intrusion of Benson and the red-haired lady.

Benson quickly guessed what was going on. "Sorry to disturb you. I thought you were alone, Monfort. I have something to whisper to you."

He introduced Miss Field.

May Barry, thinking Benson had some private matter to impart to Monfort, turned to go.

"You may stay if you wish," said Miss Field. "Mr. Benson says one thing and often means something else."

"Mr. Benson is too full of fun to say everything literally," acknowledged Miss Barry.

"I shall speak literally now, though. Miss Field and I are engaged."

"That's really good news," said Monfort, shaking hands with the couple.

Miss Barry tried to brush the strain from her face, and she cheerfully congratulated them.

"Don't you think I have an eye for beauty, Monfort?"

"Indeed; you could not have done better."

Miss Field smiled and said jokingly, "I'll see that he keeps his humor even as a married man."

"Did you hear that, Monfort? She is already making rules for me. Well, I'll try to be a happy married man, even if I have to tickle myself — ha! ha!"

They laughed, except Miss Field. She did not think the remark was funny.

"I'll take that back," Benson said quickly. "You see, I speak freely here. They are my friends."

"Benson must think marriage is a ticklish job." Monfort laughed.

"I am glad to see you are not worrying," remarked Miss Field sentimentally. "What a crime to see your beautiful work condemned. I can't bear to think about it. I don't

believe in wishing any harm, but I would like to see people who are against The Samaritan —" Benson gave a quick twitch at her sleeve. Jean Field stopped, confused.

Seeing May Barry in pain, Monfort hastened to say, "People often struggle on, not knowing what they are doing. If The Samaritan is right we must pity our foes."

A tear rolled down May Barry's cheeks, but she deftly wiped it away. A bitter realization was gnawing at her heart.

A sudden quiet fell over the group, but was quickly broken as Monfort said to Benson, "The way you looked lately I could tell you were engaged."

"I believe you," said Benson. "You know, love is funny. Even when it's foggy or raining you feel sunshine about you. You feel goofy."

"I knew you had it badly," laughed Monfort. "In fact, I felt so sure you were going to do this, I planned for it. I am going to have a house built in the Fauntleroy Woods for your wedding present."

The engaged couple stepped out of the office even happier than when they came in.

Alone with May Barry, Monfort explained that he felt the need of a change. He was going to take a trip east of the Cascade Mountains, to Brenton, to rest and study new plans. He spoke intently, conscious only of what he was saying, so that when he turned his attention on her again he was astonished. Her face was inspirited, her eyes gleamed.

"People struggle on, not knowing what they are doing," she said. "How cold those words leave me! I am struggling and I do not know what I am doing." Tears stood in her eyes: anguish pressed at her heart. "I understand now: I have been a hypocrite, and never knew. I must go. I do not fit into your picture."

Monfort looked at her moved.

"When you are in the country, even if you feel like writ-

ing me, please don't do it. I am a weakling and you will make me more so if you write. I hope some day we shall meet again — when I am the woman I want to be. Until that time, forget me. I mean it."

He wanted to stop her, but she had gone.

## IX.

Monfort started on his trip, leaving his affairs in the hands of Clyde whose romance, unlike Benson's, had foundered. He found Brenton no longer the lonely, quiet burg of four years before when he had been prospecting near there — a settlement of some hundred inhabitants made up of wood choppers, homesteaders, and gold hunters nestled peacefully in the depth of picturesque conifer-clad mountains. At that time Brenton hardly looked like a town, having only one unpaved street, bordered with a few houses, a store, and a tottering saloon.

He found there another Brenton now. The Capital company, building an important railroad, was operating in full force in the section, cutting into walls of timber, spanning the winding Yakima River with bridges and boring a giant tunnel through the Cascade Mountains. Brenton, used as a base, changed overnight. Make-shift houses were erected along the street; tents were pitched over wooden platforms. In the meantime one saloon after another popped into existence until five were added to the original one. During the day the valley rumbled with noises, like an active battle front. At night the army of workers, their clothes earth-smeared and smelling of powder fumes, poured into saloons. They strung along bars and around tables, drank, gambled, and jazzed by automatic music boxes, and fought on occasion. This was an undisciplined army drawn from fields, mines, lumber camps. It was the floating crowd that goes wherever the clarion of industrial development calls.

A newcomer venturing in one of these "joints" swarming

with hard-looking workers would have jumped to the conclusion that he had landed in a nest of desperadoes.

Monfort mingled, fraternized with them, and treated freely. Working hard all day with their muscles, these mud-grimed creatures were tired and dull. A draught of liquor gingered them up, life took on color, and they became sociable. Monfort found them full of stories, exploits, adventures. He found in them also simple ways with which they settled their rights and wrongs. To them induction and deduction were unknown terms. A sample of their method was staged for Monfort by two workers with whom he was elbowing at the bar. One insisted that a certain Mike was beaten and robbed.

"Nothing of the kind," the other came back. "Wasn't I in Seattle myself? He was chloroformed."

"I say he was knocked on the head. That's how they got his money. I was chumming with Mike. I ought to know."

"You're wrong."

"To hell you say. You can't buffalo me."

"You can't neither. You ain't big enough."

"Who says I ain't big enough?"

"Don't shout so loud."

"You neither."

"Takes more'n a guy like you to scare me."

"Is that so. Awright, come on —"

They stepped out in the street and, in the poor yellow light streaming out of the smoky saloon window, biffed and pummelled each other until the stronger of the two won and, according to the law of might, he was right. They re-entered the saloon, had a peace-making drink, paid for by the winner, shook hands, and the friction was over and forgotten.

These men, thought Monfort, are elemental but sincere. Sometimes their verdict went awry but they did not masquerade behind dramatic gestures and juggleries. He stood a long while with his back against the bar, motionless, think-

ing about this army of homeless workers, trying to find a plan to improve their lot. An idea came to his mind but was as hazy as the air in the bar-room. Dizzy from excessive thinking, he was about to step out for a breath of fresh air when he sighted in the crowd a woman somewhat familiar to him. A chill went up and down his spine. She wore a black satin dress that exposed her powdered breast and back. Her lips and cheeks were lavishly painted. She held an unlit cigarette to her lips, and her eyes were enticing. Monfort rubbed a hand over his forehead in an attempt to calm himself. An emotion which he was unable to fathom swept over him. It was really that woman — and he could have prevented her downfall. He threw the freshly lit cigar to the floor; the smoke tasted bitter in his mouth. He steadied himself and studied her, feeling himself drawn towards this underworld denizen.

Seeing the man look at her so intently, she approached him, puckered her carmine lips and smiled coquettishly, but as her actions seemed to have no effect upon him, she asked, "Say, Mister, what's eating you?"

"I'd like to have a drink with you in private," he replied, still gazing at her.

They went into a booth in the back of the saloon, a narrow room built of rough-hewn boards and furnished with a table and two wooden benches. At the bar two drinks cost fifty cents, in the booth one dollar, half of which was disbursed to the girl at the end of the day. To keep her happy he treated her often, most of the time emptying his glass in a handy cuspidor. She always consumed hers but it did not affect her as it was only diluted tea. While Monfort struggled against himself, his eyes were glued upon her face. Even blindfolded, he could have told that the thing sitting opposite him, philandering and coaxing, was a fine creature inwardly, that her trade-gestures and enticing glances were foreign to her real self. While he fought against this feeling, he kept up a hit-and-miss conversation.

She began to see something in his eyes which struck her as funny. For a moment all she could do was to stare at him in confusion. Finally she broke out and asked laughingly: "Say, are you stuck on me?"

"You are beautiful," he replied.

"Why so slow then? Don't you care for me?" She leaned across the table and placed her hands on his.

He rose dramatically and said, hardly knowing what he was saying, "I am Monfort."

"What do you mean by that? You're some kind of an officer?" she howled. "A fat chance you have in this burg." She pursed her lips and looked at him with contempt, but soon she relaxed and passed a hand over her cheeks. She was confused. Something within her made her stare at his unmoving face.

Monfort looked like a man under a hypnotic spell.

"My God, who are you?" she gasped. "Are you in love?"

"I don't know. Even if I were —" He stopped. All he could do was to stare into the depths of her eyes.

"What? in love with me?"

He threw a handful of twenty dollar bills on the table. "Take these," he commanded. "Only on this condition — that you make me hate you."

It was a moment pregnant with realization for Alma Robbles. In an instant she had traveled far from the life she was now in. She looked at Monfort with misty eyes, "You say — you love — me?" she stammered. She lowered her face over the table and she buried it in her folded arms. "You really care for me — for a woman like me?" When she raised her tearful eyes, Monfort was gone.

He repaired to his room in the humble hotel, unconscious of everything but Alma. He sat at the table and opened a book to read, to forget; but that was impossible. He paced the floor, and that creature followed him. He looked out through the window in the dark, quiet street where he heard occasional heavy footfalls of workers retiring for the night;

he imagined they were her footfalls. He straightened himself before the mirror and stared at his reflection, shouting, "You are like dough in the baker's hand, a strumpet turns and twists you." The reflection turned to Alma; beside her stood a big-faced, broad-shouldered man. He saw the fellow squeezing her arm until she writhed from pain. He abruptly drew away from the mirror and reasoned with himself. "I must dismiss her from my thoughts. There is something about her I don't understand. Her blue eyes are deep at moments, and her face seems —"

He spent a troubled night. He tried to stop thinking about Alma but Alma kept coming in and out of his mind. Finally he fell asleep. He slept until late and by noon he felt refreshed. Alma still lived in his thoughts but she did not sway him.

In the afternoon he met her in the street. She wore a dark blue serge suit and a narrow black felt hat that reached down over her brows, hiding her blonde locks. A mere trace of paint blended with her pale complexion. She was walking slowly and paying no attention to the things or people she was passing by. She was carrying a hand-bag, her tapering fingers clutching it tightly, as if she were carrying a load.

She smiled at him queerly. "Are you still cross?"

"No," he replied. He thought he could speak frankly but instead he faltered. "Please forgive me if I said anything wrong last night. I would like to be your friend."

She studied his face deliberately and silently as one studies the face of a statue. She too thought she could speak right out but instead she gazed at him until confusion came to her eyes. His fine personality hurt her, tortured her. She said to herself, "If only this man were a tramp — I could love him." In a moment she had gathered strength and, looking hard at him, said, "Why do you bother me, sir — I hate you."

"Last night wasn't the first time we met. I saw you over



a year ago on King Street. It was a dark cold night and a big-faced man was menacing you. Do you remember that night?"

She could not remember.

"But who are you?" she asked point-blank.

"I am a friend. There is a trail back of Brenton, winding up the mountain-side. Would you like to walk up?"

They started up the trail, Alma occasionally stopping for breath while telling her sordid tale.

The man with the big face was in reality a gambler and dope peddler, yet she knew him only as a prosperous cigar store man and as a good husband, rough in many ways yet sentimental towards her. For two years they occupied a fine apartment on Union Street where she lived rather an empty life but, being of a home-loving bent, she reconciled herself to circumstances and looked forward to a better future. Then ill-luck followed her husband. The den he was secretly controlling was raided by the Seattle authorities, and a large supply of opium was confiscated. He outmaneuvered the grip of the law but lost heavily. He took to gambling desperately and lost all he had left. In despair he told her that his cigar store business had foundered. The night Monfort had seen her on King Street they were in distress. Only ten dollars, which he had borrowed, stood between them and starvation.

"Why didn't you leave him?" asked Monfort.

"I wanted to, but a woman looks at things differently. When he pressed me with those ugly suggestions I thought he wasn't in his right mind. Business people sometimes do go crazy when they go broke. And as his wife it was my duty to nurse him. Finally when he found it was useless to talk the way he did, he got me to Tacoma and drugged me. I got crazy-like. Men came to me. They smiled and petted me and I laughed like a loon. I didn't know anything — "

He stopped her. Where is that man now?"

"Here in Brenton."

They had walked quite a way up the slope. They sat down under a hemlock tree, on a ridge commanding a wide sweep of the valley and the pine-clad mountains rising on the other side.

"But why do you still live with a man like that?"

She did not answer directly. She seemed so completely relaxed, her eyes resting on the hand-bag in her lap. On their way up they had often heard heavy blasting from the railroad camps. Suddenly a blast went off, and Alma uttered a loud, shrill cry. She laughed loosely, contempt twisting at the corners of her mouth. "Why do I still live with him?" Her contempt deepened. "Why do I still live at all? I am lower than these pine needles underfoot. — Why do you look at me that way?"

The flood of emotion that had swept over him the night before came over him again. He could not resist loving her, and he could hardly resist telling her about it. But it was a delicate situation. To speak now would only aggravate her tormented soul, so he said in a friendly way, "You have given me a sad, terrible story. I feel like twisting that fellow's neck and squeezing the life out of him."

Monfort was not accustomed to such reflections. To dispel them now he turned his attention to the low land and tried to interest Alma in what he was saying.

A stretch of level land, some three miles wide, swung east and west among lofty mountains. It was rather well covered with conifer, except along the Yakima River where birches, poplars, and willows formed a fluffy belt of pale green. This belt meandered up and down the center of the valley like a snake and blended with the dark green of the pines. Here and there could be seen a small clearing with a log cabin in the midst of it, and a man uprooting a stump or digging in the fertile soil. From where they stood the homesteaders looked like little ants and, he thought, just as industrious and brave, but waging a weary battle against the forces of nature. The land was fertile. Men knew that.

The profusion of timber and undergrowth showed it. But men digging up stumps with picks and shovels were just wasting their time and energy. It was an inspiring sight for Monfort, and so was the vision that came to him at the moment. He described the scene in a language that flowed like poetry. The golden shadows on the forest floor, the trees, the mountains were things of beauty; and while he talked his eyes rested upon her face, but now they did not pain her. The frost had thawed from her eyes. They danced in their lake-blue depths, and her heart sang. The song of life had come to her barren heart.

A great thing had happened to Alma. Night had turned into day. She beheld Monfort in a mist, unconscious of anything but his strong human face. Why had a man like Monfort come into her life? "Ah," she thought, "if only I could start life over again, if only I had no past."

Her happiness did not last long. Her eyes became misty; and through the mist she saw his face drawing to hers and she felt herself clasped in his arms. For a moment she clung to him with all her strength. Then she forced herself from his embrace. Snatching the revolver from her hand-bag she levelled it at her breast. Monfort grabbed the weapon quick enough, but the will to die so dominated her that she fired at the instant his hands seized the weapon; the bullet crashed into her left thigh, breaking the bone. She fell into his arms.

"What have you done, Alma?" he cried, stunned.

"Can't you see —" she replied, bitterly. "I am removing an ugly thing from life."

"Your conscience is cruel. It drives you to do injustice to yourself. I am so thankful you will live."

White with pain, she looked up at him. "If only I could live my life over again." She fainted.

He carried her down to Brenton, put her in his car and with curtains drawn to hide the woman lying by his side, he

sped through the town and to the Roslyn-Cle Elum Hospital, a short distance east of Brenton.

## X.

By evening Monfort was back in Brenton, another chapter added to his life history. He was a man too full of deeds to dwell at length upon the tragedy. He was satisfied to know that he had been instrumental to the good of Alma. He figured that within a few months her wound would heal, her broken spirit would pluck up strength and courage, and then she would come out of the hospital with a new outlook on life.

He had come back to Brenton to study out the project that had flashed into his mind that day while on the mountainside with Alma. It was a project that required a large amount of money, but this did not matter. The Samaritan had barely scratched upon his wealth. He telephoned Clyde to come over to help him lay out his new plan.

Clyde was quite puzzled about it when he arrived early the following morning. All he could see was woods and a helter-skelter sort of town that looked like a big camping ground. They had breakfast together at the hotel. Clyde ate lightly. He was too embittered to enjoy a full meal. "When the foxes and tigers were through in Seattle, snakes and vultures showed up, and their screeches and hisses claim that The Samaritan adherents are reds. Oh, yes, parrots turned up, too. If a law were passed against blabbing birds the population there would go way down."

Monfort maintained his composure despite Clyde's dark look. "If all the parrots were gone, you, as a pessimist, would have nothing to roast."

Clyde did not feel like smiling, but he grinned. He asked Monfort about the new project.

"I'll let you guess," said Monfort. "After breakfast

we will walk up the slope back of Brenton. The idea may come to you when we get up there."

They made for the ridge where Alma had shot herself. On their way Monfort told the story of Alma and the big-faced man. Under the hemlock tree he pointed to dark red clots spattered over the bed of pine-needles. "That's her blood. How silly to try to kill herself!"

"She was brave enough to hate life," remarked his embittered friend.

"She was both silly and brave," thought Monfort.

Clyde pondered. "I am beginning to understand why you telephoned. You want me to write an epitaph for the fellow with the big face."

"That is an idea — a good one. My plan is far away from that man, though. Let's sit down and look over the valley. Do you see those clearings? See how a man here and there — but before I go further I must dwell a little on a strange coincidence. The idea of The Samaritan came to me through a woman. I met May Barry about the time she had given up society life. She was then a superficially polished woman. We teamed together in our relief work. She kept giving her care and material aid to the needy with the devotion of a priestess. A change slowly took place in her personality. And I noticed that her surface-polish had gone. She had become graceful. That was the reward of her generosity. But it brought home to me the fact that one gets richer by giving than by taking. I began to think of a way in which I could use my wealth in some systematic, scientific manner. This was really what gave me the idea about The Samaritan. Knowing that human nature is plastic as well as responsive, I felt that The Samaritan would do well. It did, and if let alone it would have done better. May Barry failed. Either she lacked courage or had allowed her mind to be made up by people who thought of nothing but their own interests. At the close of The Samaritan she made a good showing, but it remains to be seen whether she

will come up to the strength of that momentary outburst of spirit. I have my doubts about her, yet I hope time will prove me wrong. You see, Clyde, I have a feeling for that woman but my spirit does not match my feeling. It reacts towards her as one would towards a mother who deserts her child and then comes back for sympathy.

"My present scheme has also been inspired by a woman. Now for the clue:

"When I arrived in Brenton my attention was drawn to the railroad workers. Their ways grated upon me, nevertheless I hobnobbed with them. Soon I realized that the reason they did not appeal to me was because I had lived too long in the city amid luxury. These creatures were agreeable beneath the skin. They were driven from place to place and into their condition by the whip of circumstances. I was in a saloon wondering how I could improve their lot when a woman caught my attention. Who was she? A prostitute — a woman as homeless as the men she mingled with. Homeless! Homeless! That word just wrested with my groping mind. It was like a sudden flash in the dark.

"Later I climbed to this spot with Alma. There was something about her that intoxicated me. I can not exactly describe my feeling for her. At any rate, I did not speak to her of love. Why? Let me continue with the clue. I turned my eyes down over the valley and saw a homesteader here and there, lost in space, trying to develop a home for himself. The project dawned upon me like an unfolding dream. I saw the valley blooming into agricultural fields and teeming with happy homes —

"For a while Alma was dazzling. She looked as sweet as Spring. Now, why did she try to kill herself? I think I understand. She had caught the melody of life but her heart was unable to house it. It said to her, 'You have trodden me down, despised me. You have thereby made me your enemy.' Life is generous when respected but harsh

when abused. But life is hopeful. Do you follow me, Clyde?"

Clyde was too deep in thought to answer readily. He seemed to be in a trance. "If I didn't know you I'd think you were preaching to me. Your story about Alma may be correct, but my version is this: She didn't die because she has a fine soul. You move me strangely. You are the only one who baffles my pessimism. You say life is hopeful. What kind of hope did you find in that crowd in Brenton? Think of the defeat of The Samaritan. Isn't that enough to kill all your hopes? Men like you make me say, 'This is a great world.' What a plan! What a plan!"

Monfort smiled inwardly. "I am glad you approve of the plan. If it turns out as I expect, it will be a fine investment. It will not bring us money but, well — we might have all the money in the United States and yet be poor. It will bring us something of finer value. Suppose some day we stand here and look down over an arcadia, Brenton, a cheerful town and the valley studded with thriving farms. Let us wait. There are busy days ahead before we can hope for that answer."

## XI.

They purchased the valley from the Capital Railroad Company. The company readily accepted Monfort's offer on account of the large business his undertaking would contribute to the new line.

The immediate problem was to clear the land — a tough job if done as the homesteaders did it but an easy problem if done by modern machinery. The powerful steam shovels, cranes, and other devices which had been used in the now almost completed railroad work were turned loose over the wooded land. The valley, named Arcadia, became an arena over which nature and the ingenuity of man were pitted against each other. Machines were set in action at both

ends of Arcadia and an array of them deployed from the center. The big pines were like mere weeds in the grip of these monsters.

The railroad construction was over, but life in Brenton remained the same. The same people were there. The only difference was that their clothes smelled of resin instead of powder fumes.

The man with the big face also remained in Brenton. If some of the gamblers in Seattle were too fast for him, the Arcadia workers were too slow. Three days after the disappearance of his wife, he received the following letter:

I am sick and tired of you. I hope we shall never meet again. If we do, avoid me or I'll shoot.

— ALMA

The note evoked from him only a wince and a grin. "You think you would, eh?" he said, crushing the letter in one hand. "I could do like this to you. If we ever meet again don't worry, there won't be any shooting. I'll beat you up and you'll follow like a whipped dog." He straightened the letter, folded it, and put it into his inside coat pocket. The Olympus bartender had told Robbles that Monfort was the last man seen with Alma before her disappearance, but Monfort's activities in Brenton weakened Robbles' suspicion.

The professional gambler has only one thing to do, if he wants to stay long in a small town — pose as a worker. If he is well-dressed, if his swift fingers do not bear the mark of toil, the tyro will shun him.

Thus Joe Robbles became an Arcadia worker. He was often sick, except at night. Occasionally, however, he had to put in a day's work to play safe.

This gave Clyde an excellent chance to pull off a peculiar act. The stage he selected for his play was a towering pine. One evening, when quiet was all about, Clyde and Monfort made for the pine, Clyde carrying a coil of wire, a pair



of pincers, and climbing spikes such as are used to scale telegraph poles.

"I'm not going to tell you my scheme; I'll give you a chance to guess," he said banteringly, paraphrasing Monfort. "I'll go up and fasten a limb of this tree with wire to that tree nearby. Why?"

Monfort laughed. "Because you are afraid the pine will go away."

"You don't follow me. Guess again. If on top of the tree there coils a snake, what'll you do?"

"I'll run."

"I see — you refuse to be serious."

The pessimist climbed up the tree and, guided by a pocket flashlight, performed his mysterious role. His friend looked up, puzzled at the shaft of light moving about among the branches. At times the light pointed toward the ground and looked like a bright moon suspended in the pine-needles. It was a weird sight to watch. By the time the actor had reached the ground, a sense of mystery had seized Monfort. He asked, "If you want to destroy the snake, why fasten the tree?"

"That's the secret. That's the plot of the drama I am going to pull off tomorrow. If you trap a bear on the ground you go at it in a matter-of-fact way. Your act will be prosaic. If you make your bear climb a tree and then trap him you'll put the element of risk in your act. . . ."

"Your conundrums are worse than cross-word puzzles."

"See if you can grasp the moral of my drama this time. If a wolf squeezes his way through a sheepfold and fills up on lambs until his paunch has grown too big to get out when the shepherd gets to him what will he do? And why?"

Monfort hesitated. "He will shoot him down because . . . has this wolf anything to do with your drama? If so, I give up. You tell me about a bear, a wolf, a snake, and a moored tree. What do you expect me to make out of this? I wish Benson were here to listen to your paradoxes.

He would answer you something like this, 'The object of your drama is to make animals fly.' His ha — ha's would be heard from the mountain tops. As a pessimist you are very paradoxical."

"Never mind paradoxes," said Clyde with an air of assurance. "There will be no contradiction in my play."

## XII.

Arcadia was already exposing a good part of its rich volcanic-ash and decomposed basalt soil, and the wrestling with the pines continued. A tender with spiked shoes climbed half way up a tree, swung a chain around the trunk, came down, signaled to the engineer, and the tug-of-war between the steam-engine and the conifer began. The tree swayed, groaned, then crashed to the ground, its broken and twisted roots sticking out in the air like fantastic arms.

Joe Robbles was a tender.

Clyde's pine was now attacked. Clyde himself stood by the steam donkey, while Monfort was puzzled and in suspense. Robbles climbed some twenty-five feet up the bulky trunk, secured the chain and came down. The engine took in the slack, then began to pull stiffly. The tree shook and groaned but clung to its position. Clyde went under the tree and discovered the trouble. "You see, Joe," he said to Robbles, pointing high up in the tree, "that big branch is tangled up with near-by trees. Go up and chop that confounded limb or we'll never get this pine down — and see that you don't fall; if you do, it'll be all over with you."

Clyde's tone of voice made Joe's flesh creep. His big face looked larger than ever, but with an ax thrust in his belt, he started his way up.

Clyde turned to the operator. "It will take half hour before we're ready to pull the tree down. Here is some money; go buy me some cigars at the store." The man left and Clyde said to Monfort, "Now prepare yourself for the

show. I'll call the engine a music-box, the cable a puppet-string, and Joe a marionette. Keep your eye on him. The show is up there."

In the meantime the fellow up in the tree chopped away into the soft, yellow wood until the limb was almost lopped off. At once he felt the tree jerking and saw the limb he was lopping tearing away from the trunk. He cast a startled glance below and when he caught sight of Clyde at the engine his hair raised on end. "Cut it out! Cut it out!" he shouted. The engine kept puffing and grinding full force. The tree began to snap, then it cut through the air with speed. Robbles clung to the branches and kicked frantically, like a scarecrow in the storm. The conifer crashed to the ground, sending a cloud of dust and leaves in all directions. But Robbles was not dead. As the pine struck the ground he bounced in the air and fell back on a mass of branches, his face bleeding and a hip broken.

Monfort and Clyde were the only ones that witnessed the accident. They rushed to the crippled fellow.

He moaned and looked fiercely at them. "You murderers!" He shook a clinched fist at them. "You hear . . . you thieves. You've stolen my wife! I'll have you arrested."

Clyde cast a hard look at him. "You're like a fish out of water: you open your mouth like a fool. You've killed your wife a dozen times, and ruined hundreds of lives in Seattle with your dope. How come you were not arrested?"

Joe turned pale, but the fire of rage burned in his eyes. "If I had a gun, I'd send you to hell!" He tried to get up but the pain from his broken body overcame him. "You hear . . . when I get over this, I'll get a gun —" He spat blood as he talked. He sank back into a tangle of fronds, unconscious.

"What a sight!" said Monfort, staring at Robbles' face. "If someone had said, 'Robbles is dead,' I would have looked at his corpse and remarked, 'Your eyes are closed now and so they were when alive. You are dead yet you never

lived.' People like him are to be pitied. The worst enemy of the criminal is himself."

Clyde was in an ugly frame of mind. "What? — I did violence to my principles to do this, but it had to be done. So I put my heart in the play, and this is your applause? Sometimes your heart is soft. Don't you do the criminal a favor by dispatching his enemy — which is himself? Creatures like this are food for worms: they are all flesh and no spirit."

The maimed fellow was packed to Brenton and placed in a Roslyn-Cle Elum hospital ambulance.

And so Joe and Alma Robbles again lived under the same roof, but neither knew it. He was assigned to a ward while Alma occupied a private room.

The first days in the hospital were long and gloomy ones for Alma. Weakened by pain and hopelessness, she became a prey to morbidity. Her clean chamber, the white walls, dresser and bed, and the frequently changed linen, as well as the nurse in her immaculate cap and dress, irritated her. "Why do you make my room so white?" she asked in her despondent spells.

Attributing Alma's raving to pain, the nurse smiled sympathetically. "White is a friendly color," she assured her.

Time gradually healed her wound as well as her broken spirit. Within two months she had acquired a normal outlook on life. She enjoyed the novels the nurse read to her, and discussed them with her and asked many questions. She, too, was involved in a strange love affair. The unfolding of her romance, unlike the ones on the printed pages, was hazy. She shaped it and reshaped it nebulously in her mind and dreamed about it. Monfort came to see her occasionally and spent long moments at her bedside. He behaved like a good friend, yet his presence filled her with life. Had she dared, she would have told him. She would have said, "How beautiful it is to be in love!"

How lucky for her that Monfort was on King Street that

night! What had brought him there? Was it fate? Was there an unseen, benevolent hand shaping her destiny? She had not lowered herself to that life because she wanted to. She had been drugged, made insensible. Since she had come to the hospital Monfort had never spoken of love to her, but she knew he must love her. How could he go to all that trouble, how could she be so glad to see him if he did not love her? Ah, if he only knew how much she loved him! But Alma was still convalescing. Very often her moments of happiness were followed by gloomy reflections. Monfort had begged her to banish the past from her thoughts but, tried as she would, the fact that she had been dragged down came fitfully to her conscience.

### XIII.

An event of importance was now brewing in that scantily populated country. Roslyn, a coal mining town a few miles north east of Brenton, was in a state of restlessness. From the beginning of The Capital Railroad construction the miners had enjoyed prosperity. Many of them, dissatisfied with working only half of the time at their underground occupation, sought employment on the railroad line. As a result the ones remaining not only had steady work, but automatically gained prestige. They asked for a twenty percent raise and the mine owners, being short of men, yielded.

The railroad work over, the men flooded back to Roslyn again; and again the miners put in only half time.

Roslyn, one of the richest bituminous coal centers in the northwest, has over two thousand inhabitants. Like most mining towns it is made up of frame houses, thinly coated or unpainted, built poorly and without embellishment, some showing the amateur hand of miners at carpentering. Most houses are surrounded by a plot of ground where the owner

spends odd moments planting and cultivating a variety of vegetables for his household consumption.

The miners sensed trouble approaching and called a union meeting. If the company ordered a twenty percent cut in their earnings, should they strike or yield? The question was debated thoroughly. Most of the members favored a strike. Everything considered, the mine owners realized a good profit. Why shouldn't they be satisfied? Others objected to this reasoning. The Roslyn miner, they argued, earns from six to eight dollars each working day. Besides, a strike would be a terrible thing? If it lasted long it meant starvation; if they lost, it meant ruin, especially to those who owned homes and had families. The company would refuse to hire them back.

Thompson, a seasoned miner, rose and said, "I have a house, and have four children to support, but I am not going to weaken on this issue! I have been through many strikes and, believe me, they are not things to trifle with. But don't forget this: if we let the company cut wages now, they'll do it again. Throw your figures — your rights and wrongs, to the wind. They don't get you anywhere. All you get out of them is talk. Look the situation square in the face. The company tries to get all it can from you, and you try to get all you can out of them. The question is, shall we cower down and go back to our jobs like a bunch of whipped cattle or shall we stand up like two-legged men and fight for ourselves and for our brother workers?"

The spirit of resistance so gained momentum that most of the miners not in favor of the strike were won over, and the few who still held to their opinion dared not express themselves.

When the company officials announced the reduction, the miners to a man, went on strike, tying up what are known as Collieries Five, Six, and Eight.

The war began peacefully. Here and there groups of miners on the streets talked the situation over, but there was

no violence. It looked more as if the town had gone on vacation. Anglers were seen along the nearby streams and around Lake Cle Elum, and shots were frequently heard in the forests where grouse, pheasant, and rabbit, as well as mountain goat, bear, and panther made hunting an interesting sport. The miners were practiced hunters. They handled guns well.

#### XIV.

The owners, confident that a spell of idleness and reasoning would bring the miners back to their senses, did not attempt to open the mines. On the other hand, the miners clung to their resolution. The strike went on for weeks, and finally the situation became critical. The company offered to hold the reduction to fifteen percent, but without result. The miners saw in the company's move the beginning of their victory.

Then the company took a drastic step, a step which almost always forces the issue in a labor struggle. It sent East for strike-breakers and opened Number Six, pulling out wellnigh half of the output the colliery yielded in normal times. But the cost was heavy. The strike-breakers were paid double time, and a good sum of money had to go for the guards who watched over the safety of the mines as well as the imported workers.

A week passed without violence. The imported men were rather shy. They entered the mine early in the morning and came out with the evening stars. They were escorted to and from the company's boarding house by guards. Some did venture into the town center, but in their good clothes there was no way to tell who they were.

Thompson, a leader in the conflict and a plucky fellow when roused, one evening encountered two strangers on the street. One of them interested him very much. He followed and studied this man until he was quite sure of himself,

then he accosted him bitterly. "Hello, Stranger! If I am not mistaken we have met before."

The stranger was tall, slender, and had a calculating face.

"I don't remember you," he replied, taken aback by Thompson's unfriendly look.

"Weren't you in Ludlow during the strike there?"

"No," the man hastily replied.

"I knew a man there —" Thompson was fast losing control of himself. "He was the foreman of a gang of scabs."

The stranger drew back. "Here — keep away from me I don't want any trouble."

"The miners in Ludlow struck and he made hell for them —" As quick as a flash Thompson struck him on the face, making the stranger rock on his feet, and with a second punch he knocked him to the ground. His hands flew at the stranger's throat and squeezed with the strength of a savage " — but you aren't going to make hell for us here."

The strike-breaker gasped and struggled to free himself from the deadly grip.

"That's it!" shouted Thompson. "Stick your tongue out and groan. Grunt! Grunt! You groan like a knifed pig! Tell the devil Thompson sent you there!"

The other strike-breaker flashed a long knife from his coat pocket and plunged the sharp steel blade into Thompson's back, yelling, "You tell him!"

Thompson rolled on his side and collapsed. "They've stabbed me," he gasped.

The two strangers quickly disappeared in the darkness.

Thompson, his left lung gashed, was rushed to the hospital.

The miners were inflamed.

Despite the warning from union officials not to resort to violence, a squad of sharp-shooters hid themselves behind trees and bushes near the number Six entrance. When the strike-breakers made their way from the boarding house to the mine it was yet too early in the morning for the



ambushed men to pick out their victims. They pointed their weapons in the direction where they knew the strike-breakers had to pass and when they heard the shuffling of feet, they opened fire. That morning Roslyn woke up with the stars to the sound of shots from the miners' hunting pieces and from the guards' high-powered rifles. Each side shot at random and the skirmish was short but furious, the attackers rushing to their homes before the alarm was fully spread, packing with them the few wounded ones who hid behind bushes instead of trees. The strike-breakers and guards, with nothing to protect them, had received the worst of the fight. Two were killed and four wounded.

A cordon of guards was drawn around the mine and strict laws were put in effect.

Railroad workers were daily coming back to Roslyn. They were in need of employment, and the pinch of misery began to be felt among the strikers.

The union offered to take a ten percent cut. The company insisted on fifteen, and demanded departures from union rules.

Bitterness raged on both sides. The situation was inevitably plunging into a long period of grim strife.

## XV.

Monfort had not been in Roslyn since the strike, but could tell what went on there by the number of patients in the Roslyn-Cle Elum Hospital, which lies on the outskirts of Cle Elum, another mining town three miles southeast of Roslyn. He was moved by the conflict, but at the time he had to give his undivided attention to his Arcadia project.

If you were standing on the ridge where Alma had attempted suicide, you would no longer recognize the valley. Unless you knew about the large army of men and machines operating there for the past few months, most likely you would have imagined that the big Kachess Lake,

at the head of the valley, had gone on a rampage over Arcadia, had washed away the conifers, and deposited on its path a bed of reddish-brown sediment. The valley floor was naked and smooth, like fresh harrowed land. The alders, poplars, and willows along the Yakima River were the only evidence left of the thick forest. They strung gauntly along the zigzagging stream.

Monfort and Clyde were again on that familiar ridge, which they fittingly called Point Conception. Monfort was bubbling with enthusiasm. He confessed to his friend, "If I were asked what brings happiness, I would reply, 'Money to do big things with.' Yesterday Arcadia was a primitive country, today it is tame; tomorrow it will be a land of blossoms. A country for ages stern and wild, now hospitable to man! When I sat here with Alma and looked down over a wilderness of pines, I caught a vision and heard whispering:

'My bosom rich I have been hiding, hiding  
Beneath these pine eons, eons untold;  
Come, woo me, and for you I will be smiling,  
And from my bosom beauty will unfold.'

"You get lots of excitement for your money," Clyde grinned. He looked at Monfort thoughtfully. "I must write your biography and teach wisdom. If the moneyed people knew what you are getting out of your method of investment you would have more imitators than hair on your head."

"Say *we*," amended Monfort. "We are partners in spirit in this enterprise."

"I like that. We are doing something here that does credit to our kind, yet we should not do this: They should do it themselves. You know why they don't do it? Because they are blind unless they look through gold-goggles. If they do not see any profit in an achievement, though there be a world of merit in it, they are as inert as wheelbarrows. They need a money-push."

Monfort smiled. "The pessimist looks at a painting too closely to like it. Man has recently emerged from the forests

and needs some sort of stimulant to spur him on. Your good phrase, money-push, may apply to the men of the past but will be meaningless in the future. What we are doing here and what we tried to do in Seattle is in keeping with the growing spirit of the day. But, come, let us put the finishing touches on our plan."

The problem facing them was to get Arcadia off their hands. Known as Monfort was, if he announced that he had some hundred farms to dispose of, not only would there have been a stampede but it would have been next to impossible to distribute the farms among those who naturally qualified for them.

Clyde had a workable idea. "Your object is to turn Arcadia over to families who really want to work on farms, is it not?"

"That is *our* object," Monfort replied, emphasizing the pronoun.

"Then, an advertisement should do the trick. How's this?

Farmers wanted for a large farm colony. Only those willing to make a home for themselves at the expense of hard work need apply. Implements and funds will be advanced."

They went to Seattle, rented a downtown office, and inserted the foregoing ad in the papers.

The proposition looked so uninviting that farmers were slow coming to the office, and they were inquisitive. Clyde would briefly explain that when the quota of applicants was rounded up they would make the conditions known at a meeting. To everyone he would say, "Our proposition will appeal to you."

Most of them went away puzzled and suspicious.

At last the requisite number of farm-seekers were gathered together.

There was a pronounced air of satisfaction in Clyde that evening. The ad had really done the trick. It had brought a bunch of hard-working people — a gathering that meant business.

He smiled pessimistically, and began by telling his listeners that they would presently understand why the terms were not made clear to them sooner.

The audience was all eyes and ears.

"You will readily see that our ad in the papers has little to do with the plan we are about to offer." He smiled again in his pessimistic way, a sort of polished grin.

The listeners turned to one another and all seemed to murmur at once: "That's what we suspected. That fellow wants to put something over on us."

"But before we come to the plan, I want to introduce Professor Simons of the University of Washington. He will give us a scientific talk about the resources of our colony. Our director will then explain our system."

The Professor read an analysis of the Arcadia soil and mentioned a variety of crops best suitable in the county. But before the Professor got to the end of his talk something happened in the audience. Monfort came on the platform through the rear door and sat beside Clyde. Several persons from the audience rose to their feet and shouted in unison, "Monfort!" There was a quick concentration of glances upon him, an upward movement, and then "Monfort!" broke out from the farm-seekers. Deafening applause followed. Professor Simons, himself moved, turned to Monfort and heartily shook hands with him, and the crowd doubled its enthusiasm. The Professor did what they all wanted to do.

Clyde leaned toward Monfort and shouted in his ear, "There is deep music in this racket!"

Monfort was introduced as the owner of the Arcadia project.

He explained that he had undertaken the development on an experimental basis. The colony consisted of individual farm well housed and well equipped. Of course, it was an involved business. Arcadia was a new country; it was next to impossible at the moment to set the value on each

farm. He suggested that they move on the farms and try them out at his own expense.

And while he, known as a man who spoke frankly, was beating about the bush, trying to give his project a business-like appearance, Clyde and Professor Simons smiled. The smile caught the attention of the audience. As Monfort continued, the smiles spread. Finally a man in the audience stood up and asked Monfort permission to say a word. "I am sure," he went on, "I am speaking for all of us, Mr. Monfort. Whatever your terms may be, we accept your proposition."

The farm-seekers gave a solid *Aye!* and cheered him not only for what he was doing, but for the man he was.

## XVI.

The trip to Seattle reunited the three friends.

Benson and Jean Field had married. They were living in Monfort's mansion while waiting for completion of their new home. Benson still retained his unique mustache and humorous air but had dropped a good many of his pet mannerisms, at least in the presence of his wife.

They were all gathered by the fireside one evening, exchanging recent experiences. Monfort said that, without Benson, he and Clyde were inclined to be too serious. "I have not seen Clyde laughing for months," he declared.

"Of course," said Benson. "What do you expect when a pessimist and a philosophic individualist get together? If there's any fun around it will be left in the cold, ah —" He glanced at his wife apologetically.

They had been too busy with their new venture, they said, to have time for anything else.

"Jean and I made a venture. Isn't marriage a venture? Yet we have not missed our fun. My advice is: get married."

"Would you give that advice even to a friend?" asked Clyde in earnest.

Jean Benson smiled. "The two greatest pessimists — what's their names again? — Schopenhauer and Leopardi — remained single. Something tells me you will do the same. You think too much."

"Perhaps he hasn't found the right girl yet," said Benson. "But some day he will, and he will fall in love so deeply, it will be all over with him."

"In other words," said Clyde, "we must be dealt a blow before we can be led to the altar. Why should that be so? Why is love a snare?"

The listeners chuckled. "How can we answer you: We don't even know that love is such a thing."

"Man puts blinders on the horse and makes it pull its load. On the other hand, nature blinds man with love and says to him: 'Lest you balk at your duty I lull your thoughts into slumber.'"

"That's right; while you are a pessimist, be a good one," said Benson.

"He tells us the truth in a distorted way," remarked Monfort.

"I trust you do not take his advice too seriously," Jean Benson said to Monfort. She paused and looked at the flames playing in the fireplace. "She comes to see me often," she continued. "And she often mentions your name. She has the habit of stopping in the middle of her conversation to say, 'If Herbert were here he would say the same thing,' or something like that. Once she visited your bedroom. Sometime later I went there to air it and saw a framed picture of hers there. I knew she had left it. The picture was taken after you had left for Brenton. She gave me one, too."

"You must give me credit for having foreseen this, Monfort," Benson reminded him.

"By the way, how does she like it there?" asked Mrs. Benson. "She likes Cle Elum?"

"Who?"

"Why — the lady who is now in the Roslyn-Cle Elum Hospital."

Monfort looked puzzled.

"May Barry, of course," she said.

"She is in Cle Elum? When did she go?"

"Shortly before you returned. We thought you knew it."

"Did she tell you why she went there?"

"This is really news to us," she said, surprised. "She is a nurse at the hospital. The way she writes about that country, things must be awful there."

Of all places, pondered Monfort, why that hospital?

Jean Benson retired for the night, leaving the three companions to themselves. They lit their pipes and leisurely stretched themselves in their arm-chairs, Clyde, as usual, thinking. "Benson," he began, "would you like to be instrumental in saving Monfort's life?"

"I think we are too late for that," Benson replied.

"What makes you say that?"

"Didn't you see how the mere mention of May Barry went to his head? Very little we can do about it now. Nature has already trapped him."

"Listen seriously: We have scotched a snake in Arcadia." He explained what had happened to Alma and what they had done to the man with the big face. "That fellow blames Monfort for Alma's disappearance and holds us both accountable for the plot to get rid of him. He is a dangerous character. A wretch like Robbles would drink the blood of his victims and fancy it wine. He would put a bullet through your head just to see you kick and wriggle."

Monfort did not agree. He thought Robbles was a low creature because he did not know any better. Monfort hoped to regenerate him.

Clyde had to get up on his feet. "You are too hopeful. That grain of good in Robbles is buried too deep beneath his callow skin to ever come out! I have a design in mind

that will prove my contention. The ship of the optimist sails smoothly in fair weather, but founders in the storm."

"What do you want me to do?" asked Benson.

Clyde sat back, relit his pipe, drew three deep puffs and replied, "Get acquainted with Robbles and learn how he feels about Monfort. Something tells me the Roslyn-Cle Elum Hospital will yet see dirty business."

Benson looked at Clyde with a frown.

"Here is how to prove his stuff. Pose as his sympathizer. You are a card-sharp from Seattle. You came to Cle Elum to clean up the miners, and so forth. I'll wager that if Monfort should come in his ward, Robbles would say to you, 'Damn, if I had a gun, I'd stamp that guy to hell!' Your task will be to provide him with a revolver."

"Isn't that a risky job?"

"Just play your cards right and you will win the game." Clyd assured him.

"Anyway," agreed Monfort, "it doesn't hurt to put him to a test."

## XVII.

The trio and Jean Benson made a trip to Cle Elum, a town a trifle larger than Roslyn, built on level ground and conspicuous for its wide streets and square blocks, but resembling Roslyn in human activities.

The party put up at the Aragon Hotel.

It was in the evening when Monfort went to the hospital. On his way he thought about Alma and May. What a strange coincidence: The two women who played such vital parts in his life should find themselves in the Roslyn-Cle Elum Hospital! Two fine creatures, he thought. True, May Barry had weakened in Seattle at the moment when she should have shown courage. The idea was too high for her state of mind, but she had a fine heart. She was drawn to



that God-forsaken country by the suffering of the bruised miners.

In the midst of his contemplation Alma came to his mind. Here was a woman, he reasoned, who had the qualities of a fine spirit. He remembered the time when he was in the Olympia Saloon with her, and how he had dreamed of her in his hotel room. Then he remembered their walk up Point Conception. Never had he felt the life-throbs so deeply, so warmly as on that eventful occasion.

At the hospital Monfort was told that May Barry was off duty that evening. He had not seen Alma for two weeks. He found her not only out of bed but able to sustain herself on her feet. A soft rosy hue had overcome the pallor that had set in her face during the period of inactivity. Her blue eyes were bright, and her lips, still a little pale, wore a smile. In the past few months her love for Monfort had tempered her bitter memories and brought tender feelings.

Monfort was very glad to see her looking so well. "My prayer for your speedy recovery has been answered."

She thanked him with a sweet smile. "I have never felt better."

"You do not look like the Alma of Brenton any more. You are like your real self now — beautiful."

The compliment pleased her and her eyes sparkled, but while she was full of love for him she could not bring herself to tell him so. Her past stood in the way. "I can never thank you enough for what you have done for me. You have taken so much pity on me." She paused, hesitating a moment. "I never thought there were men like you in the world. You must forgive me if I seem — if — I am so happy when I look at you." She spoke submissively and under strain.

He pressed her hand. "But you speak strangely. I, too, am happy in your company."

The touch of his hand thrilled her. "Just think," she said emotionally, "we haven't seen each other for two weeks." Again she stopped and withdrew her hand. "I must not

deceive myself. You have been good to me because of the situation I was in. I can't go on like this. I feel like a beggar. I have tricked my conscience." She lowered her head and remained silent for a minute. "I have tried to stay my heart, but in vain — I have loved you without rest. Please don't let this chill our friendship."

He gathered her in his arms. "I always wanted you as a friend, but my love for you is so genuine — oh, Alma — " He kissed her. "Why should we conceal our feelings? I know why you talk the way you do, but I don't want you to talk that way. You are like a new-born babe: you have no past."

"Very well, I have no past."

He placed her right hand to her breast and, holding it there for her, said, "I want you to swear that you will never talk of unpleasant memories."

"I swear — for your sake," she said, smiling with him.

"Say, 'for our sake.' "

"For our sake."

"Say, 'Since he wishes it, I shall obey the dictate of happiness.' "

"If he lets me, I shall love him and none but him until death."

"Don't speak of death. Say, 'I am pleasant to look at.' "

"You are — "

"Repeat my words. Say, 'I am virtuous.' "

"Don't make me say all these."

"You must say these words because they are true."

She did not repeat them. "I am so happy," she confessed. "When I recover, I'll become a nurse. I feel as if I could cheer suffering people just by looking at them. Oh, what you have made of me!"

Monfort had not told her that Robbles was in the Roslyn-Cle Elum Hospital. Indeed, he had always been careful to avoid retrospective conversation. Now he told her, warning her to keep away from ward number three.

She drew back as if from a dreadful contact. "Please don't mention his name again, be he dead or alive."

"When he is cured," said Monfort, "I'll provide him with money and send him away to a distant country and everything will be forgotten about him."

Not until he returned to the Aragon Hotel did May Barry come to his mind.

Monfort gone, Alma arranged her hair with utmost care and inspected her figure in the mirror. "I wonder if he likes me better with my lips painted?" she asked herself. She applied the lipstick generously, then wiped some of it off. She looked smarter with her lips over bright, but not as sweet. How charming she had become lately! She dreamed. Her nebulous romance was all aglitter in her mind. A yearning, a power stronger than herself, beat in her heart. Monfort was all hers. Her love for him told her so. Heretofore she had felt humiliated before him. Now she wanted him. No one else, she thought, could ever love him as she did.

## XVIII.

The following morning Benson, a brand-new revolver in his pocket, visited the man with the broken hip. The ward had eight white-enamelled cots in it, each occupied by a patient. The beds, their heads turned to the walls, were in two rows, an aisle running between them. The patients could see one another by propping their heads up a little. Robbles was third from the door. He had lost little flesh and had a healthy complexion. Perhaps he had never lived so sensibly before. His big body was stretched full length. He was tall, but under the bed-clothes he looked phenomenally so. His feet, pushing up two lumps in the bed-linen, seemed to be three yards from his head.

Benson introduced himself as a card-sharp from Seattle. He had heard about Robbles in Cle Elum while playing

poker. A fellow gambler was like medicine to Robbles. Robbles had gambled here, he had gambled there in the city. Did Benson know these places?

"I know them all," Benson replied.

"Is Jack's gambling den still open? I've read in the paper where Loo's joint was raided. That so?"

"Yes; it is a fact. But Loo has opened another place."

"Where?" asked Robbles.

"On Third Avenue."

"Ah, leave it to Loo. He is a foxy Chink. But he's as crooked as the hind legs of a donkey. Did you notice the scar on his forehead?"

"You bet I did."

"When you see him again, ask who did that for him. I caught him red-handed with a marked deck of cards. I'll bet he has a skull as hard as rock."

"Why?"

"The bullet glanced right off!"

"Ah, ah, ah! I heard about that." Benson was playing his part well. "So it was you who did it. Believe me, it's fun gambling in Seattle. In this town — hum — they're all pikers. When they lose a few dollars they get scared and quit."

"Let me give you a tip. Doff those fancy clothes of yours and rig yourself up as a farmer, then watch them bite. That's what I had to do in Brenton." His face grew ugly. "Say, do you happen to know that guy Monfort?"

"Never saw him, but I know who you mean. Isn't he the guy who is tearing up the valley at Brenton?"

"That's him. I have an account to settle with that guy." Joe took from under his pillow a check signed by Monfort and Alma's letter. "If this signature and letter are not written by the same hand I am cockeyed. When I get out I'll get a gun and puncture his hide as sure as hell. He stole my old woman and tried to kill me."

"You don't say!" Benson shouted feigning astonishment

while looking at the gambler in disgust. His attention fell on something at the foot of the bed. "Sure, a man like that ought to be lynched. Good gracious, what are those things there?"

"Where?"

"There!" he said pointing a finger.

Robbles grinned and wriggled his toes. "They are my feet."

"Your feet! They seem so far away from your head! They look like two camel-lumps, ha! ha!" Three patients, with a full view of his face, chuckled. The rest coughed and grumbled, one saying loud enough to be heard, "That fellow gives me a pain."

That same morning the rest of the Monfort party came to the hospital to see May Barry only to learn at the office that it was impossible to see her just then. She was taking personal charge of a miner, Thompson, who was in critical condition.

"While we are here," said Monfort to the rest, "I want you to meet a lady you will all like."

They found the convalescent on the balcony on the south side of the building, warming herself in the spring sun. Dressed in a grey woolen sweater, cream-colored skirt, and low tan shoes, she lounged in a big arm-chair, her attention wandering over Yakima River that ran a little distance from the hospital, and whose limpid waters glided laughingly down towards the Ellensburg plain. The trees along the stream were beginning to bud, while the bare ground of winter was turning green, here and there a wild flower bursting into life.

They gathered three of the many chairs scattered on the balcony and joined Alma. They fell into impersonal conversation as people not familiar with one another are wont to do. The winter was colder there than on the other side

of the Cascade Mountains. The sea water of the big sound tempered the climate around Seattle. But the summers were pleasant in Kittitas County, clear, sunny and warm, and there were deep valleys to wander and camp in, picturesque mountains for climbing, and big lakes for boating and swimming.

Now and then Monfort smiled at Alma, while she could hardly keep her eyes from his face.

It was about time for him to go to ward number three. On leaving, he said to Clyde, "Some day all of us must make an automobile trip to Lake Cle Elum. Miss Roget is beginning to walk now. The outing will do her good."

Alma smiled at being called Miss Roget. She tried to catch his eyes but at that moment he was looking at Clyde.

"If I were not so busy," he continued, "I would suggest we all go there this afternoon. Why don't Miss Roget and you drive there today? It's warm. It must be pleasant by the lake."

Clyde thought the suggestion was a bold and mischievous one. He secretly studied Alma's features and said to himself, "In such a company one is likely to be trapped."

Alma would have been more pleased had Monfort included Jean Benson, too, but she did not object. Her sentimental eyes followed him as he walked to the other end of the balcony, to the door leading within the hospital, and mentally said to him, "You are everything to me. If anything should come between our love, I would die broken-hearted."

All of a sudden her face turned frightfully pale, her eyes stared, and her heart almost stopped beating.

Jean Benson was alarmed. "Miss Roget, you don't feel well —"

"It's my leg — only my leg," she stammered.

"My God; please, Mr. Clyde, hurry for a doctor."

"No, no; don't go. It's nothing. It's only my leg. I was leaning too heavily on it." She made a violent effort to control herself.

"Must be careful. Your leg is not healed yet," said Clyde. He followed her staring eyes and, at the other end of the balcony, saw May Barry embracing Monfort. But Clyde, as well as Jean Benson, was unaware of the relation between the convalescent and Monfort. He called Jean Benson's attention to the couple.

Miss Barry, coming to the balcony for a breath of fresh air, had met Monfort at the door.

"Is she his sister?" asked Alma, her voice fraught with agitation.

Jean Benson lit up with a smile. "She is his sweetheart."

The suffering woman looked as if nailed to the chair, her eyes shot with pain. The harsh hand of fate tore at her heart. "I see —" was all she could say.

Jean Benson placed a feeling hand on her shoulder and implored her to see the doctor. "I can't bear to see you suffering this way."

Alma was deaf to her words. "Is she beautiful? She doesn't look it."

"She certainly is," said Jean. She lowered her voice and continued in a confiding manner, "Their love runs like the romances you read about in history. She is the daughter of a wealthy Seattle family. She has all the means to live in comfort and luxury, yet, here she is, wasting her heart away nursing suffering people. The good she has done to the unlucky in Seattle — why, a goddess could not have done more. And Mr. Monfort — do you know anything about him? I can't even begin to tell you what kind of a man he is. Isn't it wonderful for a couple like that to fall in love with each other?"

Alma slumped in her chair, her face as white as chalk.

Clyde and Jean turned to the balcony door to call for assistance but both May Barry and Monfort had already gone, she to Thompson's bedside, he to ward number three.

Robbles certainly would not have laughed at having his feet compared to camel-lumps, yet, there he was, looking

at Benson's humorous face and laughing lustily until the pain from his fractured hip stopped him. "Gee, my side hurts," he complained. "That scoundrel — he oughta be lynched. He hired a man to do the dirty work for him. He didn't have the nerve to do it himself. To hell with both of them!"

"I'm with you," Benson assured him.

"You are? Shake hands!"

They shook hands.

At once Robbles lifted his head from the pillow and looked hard at the door. "There's the guy! I wonder what he is doing here — a gun, give me a gun!"

Benson pulled out a shining revolver and, covering it with his hands, passed it to him, whispering with a squint, "There are six good plums in it."

Robbles thrust the weapon under the bedspread. "I am as happy as a drunken man," he said aside to Benson, his lips cutting a sidewise twist.

As Monfort approached, he glowered. "I am crippled — I can't fight. Is that why you're here?"

Monfort raised a calming hand. "Listen, Robbles —"

"Listen hell!" and he levelled the automatic at Monfort. "Where shall I put them, in the head or in the belly?"

Monfort was taken by surprise. "Jump on him Benson!" he shouted.

Robbles let go, the shot frightening everybody in the ward except Benson, who was laughing. "Ha! ha! ha! You couldn't kill a bug with those cartridges!"

"You dog!" growled the man. "So you didn't know Monfort, eh? Take that and that!" He emptied the five shots at him. Luckily Benson jumped back quick enough to avoid the flame from the spitting muzzle; but he was not far enough to dodge the smoke that made his face as black as a coal digger.

The noise threw the patients into a panic. Two sought



shelter under their cots, the others buried themselves under the bed coverings.

With Benson looking like a black-face comedian, the wild drama seemed like a vaudeville comedy, but the miners were not in a laughing mood. "Can't you find a better place to do your shooting? Don't you know people are sick in bed here?"

Others, roused by the smell of the powder, said, "Why don't you go to Roslyn with your guns and let the strike-breakers have it?"

"Too bad we have bothered you. I am sorry," said Monfort. He turned to Robbles and eyed him without rancor. "Your past is as black as night; forget it or it will make your future blacker. When you court vengeance you're courting the devil himself. You got me wrong. I am here to help you."

"Like hell you are!" retorted Robbles. "How about my old woman?"

"Listen, Robbles, I am here to do whatever I can for you."

Enfeebled by the excitement, Robbles dropped his head back on the pillow and leered at Monfort. "Tell that to Sweeny — you can't bluff me."

"Robbles, you are making a mess of your life. Your thoughts dance like maniacs in that twisted brain of yours. Far be it from me to bluff or laugh at you. I can't laugh at ruins. I am here to help you if you let me."

But Robbles was not to be appeased by words. He glared. He was like a man boiling with hatred but unable to express it. "You make me sick, both of you — get out!"

Benson stopped wiping the black from his face. "Robbles, you're a bum gambler. The cards were in your favor and you didn't know how to play them."

As the two friends were going out, Robbles shouted, "I'll play a better hand when I get out of this place. I'll buy my own bullets!"

Monfort was disappointed. He said to Benson, "Clyde

was right." And added regretfully, "It's bad when you have to lose faith in your fellow man."

## XIX.

The situation had been bad in Roslyn. Ill-feeling was rampant between the union and non-union miners, and between the organization and the company. Now it was worse. The town was filled with gloom and bitterness. It could not be otherwise. A population that depended on the fortnightly check to live had not seen a pay-roll for two months!

The spirit of man fluctuates with economic conditions. In prosperous times it runs high, in depression it sinks. But there are times when hardship is resisted with fortitude; that is when men are fighting for a principle. The union miners bared their breasts to hunger. Their gnawing stomachs whispered to them, "Give in; go back to work." Their spirits cried, "Stick it out; you are fighting for a good cause."

For some the situation was not only desperate, but tragic. No matter how strong the spirit for the cause, love for the pining household was stronger. What else could they do but go back to their jobs and work side by side with the strike-breakers, their natural foes!

Others weakened for less valid reasons. They had a little savings in the bank and did not like to see it dwindle away entirely; or they had bought automobiles on the installment plan and ran the risk of losing them. Added to this was the clever maneuvering of the mine owners. They picked out the less ardent strikers, usually the ones who had held the best jobs before the strike and, rumor had it, induced them to go back to work by permanently fixing their wages at the pre-strike scale.

Collieries Number Five and Eight were still closed, but Number Six was operating full swing. The backbone of the strike, however, was not broken, the striking force being

still seventy-five percent strong. It had dropped from its ranks the weak-hearted members, just as a army marching to a distant goal drops its weaker ones.

The attitude of the owners may be seen from the circular which was posted in the town:

"We bear no grievance against individuals or organizations. We run our mines as our sense of business and equity best directs us. If you do not like our policy, try elsewhere."

The statement bit the miners like acid. It doubled their hatred for the ones who deserted their ranks. The streets of Roslyn became scenes of bloody fights. The brawls usually ran the same gamut. The strikers pounced upon the shirkers and the guards shot at the aggressors, each fight ending with the ambulance carrying away shirkers with broken faces and strikers with perforated legs.

All this time May Barry had seen over and over again, in the hospital, the end of these conflicts.

The evening of the day Benson had staged his melodramatic stunt, the Monfort party, including May Barry, was in the Aragon Hotel talking about the struggle.

May Barry wore a simple black velvet dress and a white sport shirt opened at the neck. She seemed to have aged a little, but there was a charm about her that one could not help admire and remember. Had she remained in Seattle, she said, she might have had a different idea about the strike. "One must live among the people to understand them. I have nursed both strikers and strike-breakers and have listened to their stories. I have heard enough horrors to make me sick at heart."

"Do you want us to understand that you are in sympathy with the miners?" asked Monfort.

"I am in sympathy with both sides. Human beings struggle on, not knowing what they are doing."

"You are speaking fine thoughts, May," commented Mrs. Benson.

"They are not mine, Jean. I borrowed them." She looked at Monfort.

"We all borrow thoughts from one another," remarked Monfort. "They are the common heritage of the human race, but they become our individual property when they take root in us and shape our action."

May Barry nodded. "I have heard that biblical aphorism before. When I heard it from your lips, however, it took hold on me. That aphorism made me understand Thompson's dying words. That man had worked underground all his life, and he knew what he was talking about. Let me repeat what he said on his deathbed: 'I've always been on the side of the miners, but I have been fighting blindly. The Roslyn fight is a blind fight. Both sides are right and wrong. One side says, "I have my money invested in the mines. I am entitled to a good profit." The other side replies, "I waste my life in your mines. Pay me my price." "But your price takes away from my profit." "Well, your profit makes my earnings small." "Then we will fight." They clash. They destroy life and property. For thirty-five years I have seen this kind of business going on.' He gasped for breath. I could tell the man had only a few moments longer to live. He said between gasps, 'Who is right? Who is wrong? We're all wrong.' These were the very words he said as he closed his eyes for ever. His words twisted and stirred thoughts into my mind. 'Aye,' I said to myself, 'we must all be wrong.'"

The words roused Monfort. For a spell he remained in his seat as motionless as a waxen figure. The suggestion of another important project had blossomed in his fertile mind.

On the other hand, Clyde was a happy man. "Life itself is wrong!" he exclaimed. He straightened himself in the chair and his brows creased. "If you remove the veil of delusion from your eyes, the first thing you stare at is, Futility! Thirty-five years of struggle. What does that mean? It means thirty-five years of bitterness! If he lost the strike

he had to go back to work under unsuitable conditions; if he won, the cost of living would go up. If he worked at all he was in danger of being twisted or torn by gas explosions or flattened by caving roofs; if he didn't work he faced starvation." He looked straight at May Barry and asked, "Wasn't Thompson glad when death came to him?"

Jean Benson caught her breath. "How distressing this kind of talk is. Please let's get away from it."

"That's music to Clyde," laughed her husband.

Monfort was still motionless in his chair and wrapped in thought. "It is music," he said emotionally. "Storm and thunder are music to the mind. Clyde cries down life because he feels that it is wonderful! May Barry had to come to this strike-tossed wilderness to find herself!" He rose to his feet and continued in a throbbing voice, "I have often tried to know what led me to those caverns of gold. When everything in the tunnel pointed to discouragement, something within me urged me on, something whispered, 'Go on; behind these hard walls you will find your world!' Where did that whisper come from? Through a power of which we are not conscious? I don't know — a vision has just come to me: A craggy mountain, and it is covered with men scrambling up its rugged sides. Some kick with their heels at the man below them; some pull others down by their legs; others tumble from rock to rock clutching at each other's throat. Oh, futility. It is the vision of what man is doing on this planet!"

Clyde, familiar with Monfort's way of thinking, at once knew what his friend had in mind, but for the sake of the rest of the company he said, "But your vision is hazy. We cannot see it clearly."

"You are correct, Clyde. You cannot see a vision in detail. We must have a closer view of it. Tomorrow we will go to Roslyn."

For the second time May Barry had stirred in Monfort a

big project. He remarked to Clyde, "Isn't it remarkable for her to talk the way she did?"

"Perhaps she caught a glimpse of your men scrambling up the mountainside," Clyde replied, "and she concluded that it was all wrong."

"Yes; but the fact that they struggle up shows that they want to get somewhere."

"They want to get somewhere, but human nature does not let them."

"You mean it is natural for them not to get anywhere?"

"From what I have seen, that is my view of men."

"But then how can you explain the reason they are fighting? They must have an object in view."

"They fight because they don't know any better."

Benson laughed. "Monfort and Clyde tickle me. Thank God they are not smoking their pipes. If they were, we would be in for discussion until morning." He said to the ladies: "Would you like to hear how they go at it when they are smoking and debating?"

"We certainly would," they replied readily. "The air is getting so heavy, a little ventilation will be welcome."

He looked at his pals with a mischievous glint. "This is the way they act: Monfort keeps talking until the fire in his pipe goes out; then Clyde takes up and keeps at it until his pipe is out. In the meantime Monfort strikes a match and puffs away until his time to talk comes; then his pipe goes out again, and that gives Clyde a chance. Let me tell you about the joke I played on them in Fauntleroy. As you all know, Clyde likes to talk on skepticism. Well, I placed a box of matches beside him and another box beside Monfort, then I asked Clyde about the value of pessimism: His box of matches was empty long before Monfort's. On another occasion I craftily slid my matches beside them and said to Monfort, 'I don't seem to be able to grasp the difference between the monistic and the dualistic philosophies.' He lit his pipe, drew a few thoughtful puffs and began, and of

course his pipe went out. He struck another match and continued to explain. . . Well, just as I expected, Monfort's box was empty when Clyde's was still half full — "

"Now, Benson, you know you never did anything of the kind," Monfort remonstrated, breaking into a smile. "You invented that story to entertain Jean and May."

But Clyde was not going to let Benson get away with it that easy. He fixed a wistful eye on the story-teller while chuckling to himself. "Since I know Benson, I have been haunted by a riddle. It haunts me in my sleep and dogs me while I'm awake. Sometimes I pull myself together and drive it away, and say to myself, 'At last I am free!' All at once there it is again, at my heels!"

"What is it?" he was asked.

Clyde tried to be serious but his mouth cut funny twists. "It is about his mustache. Anyone can see it is unique. How did it get that way?"

Benson's mustachio became the center of attraction.

"That is a good question," Monfort put in, glad to square up with Benson. "Let's analyze."

"To begin with," Clyde went on, "you will notice that it turns up at the right side and down at the other. Now, in the scheme of life things do not happen by accident. Isn't that so, Monfort?"

"That's another good question," agreed Monfort, and to encourage him he added, "It is a well known fact that mustaches, like babies, can be trained."

"The question that has always haunted me is: How did it ever get that way? Oh, if I can only solve that obstinate problem! Benson, answer me this — "

"Don't answer him," quickly interjected his wife. "He is joking — of all things,"

Benson was at home in this atmosphere. He proudly remarked that if his mustache was good enough to bewitch a critic like Clyde, it must have artistic quality.

But Monfort was too taken up with his thoughts to dwell

on trivialities any longer. "We'd better wait to solve this riddle at a more suitable time. We have a problem ahead that will more than make Clyde forget his funny torment."

They were talking about their trip to Roslyn when Jean Benson thought of Alma. Why not invite her with them tomorrow?

"Judging by the way she suffered this morning," said Clyde, "I doubt whether she can stand the jolting of the automobile."

"Poor Miss Roget. She is such a pleasant woman," said Jean Benson.

"I am afraid she is not well enough yet," Clyde suggested.

"Something strange about her leg. When she came to, did you notice how easily she walked away?"

"I believe her leg is all right," observed Clyde. "It's just weakness. She has been confined too long."

"I'll telephone her," said Monfort, "and tell her we will pick her up on our way."

A moment later he hung up with a puzzled look. "She is afraid the trip will put too much strain on her. What a poor telephone system they must have in this town. I could barely hear her. Her voice was low, muffled, and there was interference. It sounded as if someone were thumping on the wires. I could not make out whether she said she did not wish to come or she wished she could come. I did hear her say that she wants to rest tomorrow. Thump-thump! that telephone made my blood creep!"

## XX.

The morning is mild. The warming sun streams through the scattered pines and brightens shrubs and bushes. The automobile creeps over the cement road to Roslyn slowly, and the three men and two women contemplate the scene. The country along the way is almost level and is not particularly attractive. Yet the party seems to delight in the sight.



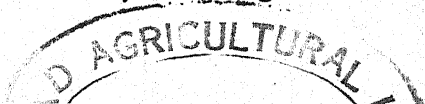
It must be the morning, when the shadows are deep and the air is still and calm, when the foliage is gold and silver on one side and purple on the other, that captures their interest. Now Roslyn comes into view. The town nestles in a shallow depression. On the southwest side the ground slopes up a little and is dotted with wooden houses. On the northeast side, also strewn with frame houses, starts the slope of a mountain range that serrates the sky. The mountain-side is covered with hemlocks, firs, and pines, and is furrowed with gulches and wooded like jungles. It is beneath these mountain-ranges that lie the rich bituminous coal beds.

The three men apply at the office for permission to visit Collier Number Six. Questioned, they explain that they are the managing staff of Arcadia and that they are interested in the geologic structure of the region. The Superintendent is glad to let them visit the mine but he hasn't anybody on hand to guide them, all his foremen being inside now. Benson tells him that for several years he was foreman in eastern coal mines. They can find their way without trouble.

Each puts on a miner's cap in front of which is fastened a battery-fed light. The lamps look like miniature automobile headlights.

They start. Miss Barry and Jean Benson remain outside.

As they enter, a cool breath strikes their faces. That is because it is warm outside, Benson explains. Underground the temperature is the same, winter and summer. The air is damp and musty; the walls are mouldy, the ceiling is heavily timbered. The men can swing along without butting their heads against the cross-beams above, though Clyde, the tallest of the three, stoops constantly. Trains of small empty cars go in the same direction. They create a fearful rumble and raise a wind as they dash by. The men arrive at a crossing; one avenue branches out to the left, another to the right. Each hundred yards or so they pass one of these crossings, called entries. They must have gone a full mile since they left the sun light and the end of the main artery is not in sight.



They turn to the left and follow an entry. It is less roomy here and, unlike the main artery, has only one track. Being narrow, there is very little timbering here. Beyond the range of their headlights it is dark everywhere. The walls are black with coal, the ceiling looks like the color of the slate school children use, and is scarcely five feet high. Now and then an electric motor passes; it pulls a string of cars loaded with coal to the main artery and returns with empty ones. Every fifteen or twenty steps they see a room-entrance along the wall to the right. They turn the lights into them but all they see is darkness. "They are old rooms: the coal has been taken out of them," says Benson. They keep following the entry. Now they notice that a switch curves from the entry-track into each room. They halt in front of one of these rooms and look up. The seam slopes a little. They hear the swish of a shovel, the thumping of a pick. A little way up they see two lights moving about, but they can not see the miners. All they see is two radii of yellow light in a pit of darkness. At times when the illuminant of one miner turns towards the other they do see something that looks like a human form. Now they hear the shout, *Fire!* and they see the two lights flitting down toward them a little way, then disappear into the wall, into a so-called cross-cut. There comes a boom. The air vibrates. Puffs of musty wind blows in their faces. A moment later they see the two lights up there where the blast went off but, due to the smoke from the blast, they look dull, like automobile lights in a dark foggy night.

"How is the smoke driven out?"

Benson tells them how.

Monfort, interested in the explanation, forgets about the low ceiling and bumps his head against it. Clyde is more cautious.

They go up into the room. The track here consists of wooden rails, and runs in the center of the place which is a good twenty feet wide. On both sides of the track they see

forests of wooden props. These are stout, thickly set and tightly wedged against the slaty roof, offering resistance to the huge mass of strata above. A few are bent or crushed by the pressure of the mountain. What if they should all break? Sometimes they do and as readily as stubble under the foot of an elephant, but the terrific snapping and cracking they impart warns the miners of the coming danger.

They keep walking up. Benson is first, Clyde last. They all stoop like men bent with age and toil. They are now at the end of the room, facing a wall of black coal. The two miners are busy, one shovelling coal in a car, the other cracking with a pick a block of coal too big for handling. Both wear heavy leather shoes, strong blue overalls, and thick red-flannel shirts to protect them from dampness. A drop of water drips here and there from the ceiling. The floor is moist, the air damp. Their garments are smut with black dust and their hands and faces are as black as the coal itself. So, they think, this is the kind of job men are fighting for! Yet Clyde and Monfort learn from the two men that the underground worker is fond of his job. Outside, say these creatures with dark faces, one day is hot, another day is cold or raining. In the mine it is the same throughout the year. But the fear of being in constant danger of explosions or cave-ins must prey upon them. The dusty men grin, showing their teeth, the only white things to be seen there. They are fatalists in that respect.

As Monfort listens, he is moved. He seems sensitive to everything. Now he looks at the coal seam and his mind is aglow. All there is to be seen there is coal, coal that is burned in furnaces. It must be something else that moves him. Against the roof, in a spot where the slate has been dislodged, he sees the impression of a leaf, clearly, beautifully defined, as if the original had been there. Somewhere in the floor he notices faint indications of a stump. Perhaps the stump of a lepidendrom or a sigillaria. His mental eyes see towering forests squeezed into a wall of carbon less than

five feet thick. Every bit of coal he picks up reveals the story. He sees in it the grain-structure of ancient plants when ferns and calamites were giant things, when the forests were dark, swampy, and vast.

It is the romance of ancient times when life was young and groping, when huge animals made the earth quake beneath their tread, and man was yet to be born, that captures his interest.

"When this bed of coal was forming, man was still slumbering in the lap of time," he said to his two companions. "Yesterday he dwelled in caves, today he soars to the sky, tomorrow he will fly to the stars!"

That sort of language gets beneath Clyde's skin. His poor opinion of the present and of the future is magnified by his aching back and ribs. He says, "I have more hope in baboons than in man. Certainly man has a past. He is a bundle of the past. Take away from him his tradition and he'll collapse and crawl like a worm. The baboon will keep his chin up."

Benson began to laugh, only to become serious. "When I was foreman in a mine back in Pennsylvania, I took up geology, and the good it did me I hope never to forget. Not only did it give me confidence for the future but taught me to like the earth more."

"Well said, Benson," Monfort approved. "The history of the earth does make one love the earth more. Therein you learn that the earth is our ancient Mother and that people have for ages groped along the same path. Such knowledge puts in you the spirit of tolerance and progress. I can hear Mother Earth saying to her favorite offspring, man: 'Look what I have done for you in the past. I have given you life, shape, and mind. See that my efforts are not in vain.'"

Benson and Monfort made room for Clyde. They could tell by his dark brows that a verbal storm was coming. He steadied his feet under him, fixed a look at his comrades and

swung his head up, butting it vigorously against the rocky ceiling. His speech was demoralized. "To the devil with it all!" he cried.

"So says the ardent wooer sometimes," remarked Monfort. "Come out of your hiding, Clyde: You hate your fellow man because you like him."

Benson smiled thoughtfully. "Clyde sets his ideals too high; that's why he bumps into obstacles."

"I can see through him," Monfort went on. "Here he is marvelling at the book of the earth and he sees the hero blundering foolishly. Why should man fight over what nature has given him? Before we leave Roslyn there will be music on his lips. We are going to buy the mines."

They retraced their steps to the main artery and out of the mine. Again they were under the blue sky, their eyes dazzled by the sun, their ribs and backs sore, but a great project soothing them.

## XXI.

For months Alma had gradually, painfully climbed out of a life that threatened to engulf her. From an abyss she had ascended to sunny heights — to a land of love. Then of a sudden her happy world darkened and vanished.

After what she had seen and heard at the hospital she withdrew to her room in deep despair. It was useless for her to go on now. Hot, bitter tears rolled down her face. Monfort had forgotten her. How could he do that? Her love for him was so great. It was all over for good now. Why was she ever born? Black thoughts raced in her feverish mind. She was broken-hearted, sick of life. If Monfort had not interfered she would have ended her suffering months ago, on the mountainside. She recalled the scene at Point Conception when for a moment the song of life was in her heart, but the memory lingered only a moment in her despairing mind. "What a silly thing I am!" she said to herself.

"Why should he love me? I shrink even from myself! Have I not dragged myself — that Robbles! Why should a man like that live? That beast, I'll kill him!"

For twenty-four hours she neither ate nor slept. She brooded and planned, her grief briefly interrupted by a hospital attendant who brought her food, and by Monfort's telephone call. Toward morning she threw herself across the bed exhausted. A few hours later she woke up shaky and weak, but firm in her resolution.

## XXII.

When the three men came out of the mine and rejoined the women it was about noon. Over their lunch they talked about two things they still wanted to do before the day was up. One was to visit Monfort's gold tunnel which was about twenty miles west from Roslyn. The other, was to sound the mine owners about selling their mines. They decided to split the party; Clyde, Benson, and his wife remained in town to attend to business.

Monfort and Miss Barry drove up some two miles beyond Lake Cle Elum then left the automobile and followed the trail leading to the top of Mount Baldy. This was the path over which Monfort hauled on pack-horses the treasure from his tunnel. They had only a short distance to go but they had to go up grade and around rocks that had rolled down on the trail. They did not become fully aware of the impressive scene until they reached the summit. A world of colossal, rocky mountains reared about them. The naked granite peaks gleamed in grey while the slopes reaching up to them were covered with conifers and showed that luxuriant, vivid green seen only in clear air. Not a strip of level country was to be seen anywhere save in the direction of Roslyn where a valley of pines swung towards Ellensburg. Immediately below them was Lake Cle Elum, some four miles long, and fringed with willow, alder, and other leafy

trees that cast fluffy reflections in the crystal blue water. From their position the lake looked more like a patch of clear sky surrounded with fleecy clouds.

They continued on the trail which now sloped down and led them to the base of a granite cliff, before a grotto-like opening hardly high enough for a man to enter without stooping. In front of the opening there spread a terrace of blasted rock and gravel turned to a dull drab by the elements. A short distance south of the tunnel, by a little stream, there stood under shady pines a log cabin which showed the marks of time. The loose and decaying bark had crumbled from the walls, while the roof, of compressed conifer fronds, was partly sunken in. Deep shadows and dull beams fell upon the forlorn hut, and a spray of dry, brown pine needles covered the ground about it and the path leading to the door.

Deep silence was all about. The faint gurgle of the stream and an occasional bird-cry accentuated the utter desolation there.

"Strange that you should have come to this wild country," said May Barry. "Didn't you feel lonesome all by yourself?"

"The cabin was the castle I dreamed in; the tunnel the laboratory where I shaped my dreams. I was not alone. Hope kept me company."

"Oh, it must have been wonderful."

"Hope is a good friend. When all about you seems black, she steals in and lifts you on wings."

"You always approach your problems through reasoning methods. Didn't you trust to hope here?"

"Well, naturally. But I depended primarily on geologic knowledge. I knew by the nature of the seam in the tunnel that once upon a time there was a river beneath this mountain. Still, without hoping and dreaming I could never have had the strength to reach the goal."

They turned to the tunnel. There was nothing remarkable about this gold den. A casual visitor might have taken it for a bear-cave or a water-eaten cavern. The walls

were mildewed and the ledges, sticking out from their surfaces, were darkened by mould, while the floor was covered with puddles of soupy water topped with dirty, yellow spume.

On their way back they stopped on the mountain-top again, but this time Monfort seemed more interested in the past than in the present. He thought of the time when May and he had teamed together in their errands of benevolence, of their automobile rides, of the hours they had spent together on the terrace in Fauntleroy. Events had so crowded his life since those days that he had to make his memory skip and jump to shape a clear picture of the time when romance was in their hearts. Now she seemed to have acquired more charm and understanding, yet all he felt for her was friendship. It was one of the moments in his life when he did not understand himself.

May Barry, too, was reminiscing, and she felt the heart-throbs of the past coming back to her. She looked at him with glad eyes and a long, lingering smile. "How good your voice sounds again, Herbert! I was foolish to take sides over The Samaritan."

"I may have acted rashly myself."

"Ah!" she replied, her eyes wandering over the wide vista of mountains, "Don't let's talk about disagreeable experiences."

"Let's forget the past," he agreed. He clasped her hand. He felt emotion, yet he could not bring himself to take her in his arms, kiss her, and speak of love.

She tossed her head back and smiled again. "Brothers and sisters have words — and forget. But you seem to be thinking. You should not think at this moment. You should look like this —" and in her way she tried to give the expression of one in love.

He smiled awkwardly.

May Barry was taken back. "You don't seem to be yourself, Herbert," she said, studying his face. "What's on



your mind? Once you told me that if I did a certain thing it would leave a scar in you. Is it that scar that hurts now?"

He told her that Miss Roget was the woman he had seen that night on King Street.

"The woman I tried to save?" she said with a start. "How tragic! I called on the address you gave me but she had already gone, and I was unable to trace her. But, Herbert, why bring that up and spoil our moment together?"

"I can't help thinking about her. Her voice last night haunts me." He acquainted her with most of the facts about Alma, and added, "She is a rare woman."

"Poor girl," she thought. "But you did everything you could to take her out of that life."

"If I hadn't had The Samaritan project on my mind so much I could have prevented her —"

A quick, spirited look spread over her face. "The Samaritan! That name sweeps over me. It was our spiritual child. Its mother bruised it. Now I am weeping over its grave." Her eyes began to wander over the green and jagged mountains. She said, as if to herself, "If our child had lived, what a beautiful thing it would be today."

In the meantime Alma was trying to solve her problem in a pitiful way. While Monfort was dreaming about her, Alma, a revolver hidden in her coat pocket, shambled into ward number three, a haggard figure.

The scene had not changed since Benson had staged his melodrama. Some patients were reading, others were chatting. One patient stared hypnotically at the foot of Robbles' bed where the convolution of the camel's back stood out in striking outline. Robbles himself was stretched full length on his cot, looking at the ceiling as if lost in thought. The sight of his woman made him raise his head from the pillow with a jerk. "Alma — you here?"

"I am here. Have you anything to say?" Her voice was firm, friendless.

"You look sick — say — are you here to shoot me? Get that hand out of your pocket!"

She laughed queerly. "Why think of such a thing? I am here to see you."

A sense of fright began to lay hold on the miners, some whispering to others, "There we go again, fellows."

A crafty man like Robbles was not easily fooled. He removed the package of cigarettes and the newspaper from the chair by his bed and bade her be seated. He must look into that pocket if he could. Was it possible she still cared for him?

"We were born to love and die together." Despite her calculating look, she was very attractive to Robbles.

He must put his arms around her. If she refused to kiss him she was there to kill him, so he reached for her and said, "Talk about missing you — I even cried. You have cried, too. Poor Alma — kiss me?"

The beast, she thought: Why not shoot him now? Instead, she grasped his hand and pressed it in hers. She could play the game, too.

"I'll bet she loves me," thought Robbles.

"Oh yes; I cried. I've cried enough for all sorrowing women." She turned away, unable to bear the sight of the man. "I have drunk the sweetness of life to the full. Now it's soured on me."

"Say, you talk swell now. Did some rich guy pick you up and treat you rough? What has that guy Monfort done to you?"

The mere mention of the name deepened her hatred for this man with the big face. Why not kill him now? "Did you see him? Did he tell you anything about me?"

"He is too slick for that. The other day he sent a funny gazook here to start something, then he came right in and said: 'Robbles, forget your past. You've made a mess of

your life, but you didn't know any better. I am here to put you on your feet.' "

"He said that?"

"Ya — the mealy-mouthed preacher! It was the way he said it that hurt. Ever since I've been saying to myself: 'Robbles, you have lived like a fool. You must change.' But I think I can put my finger on his troubles. He has a dam good hunch that some day I'll pull a stunt he won't like at all. So he tricked you? Wait till I get out. I'll buy a gun — God, Alma, you look pale. Don't worry, I'll stick to you to the last."

She was dizzy. "If only I could shed a tear for you," she muttered so faintly he did not hear. The thought of what she was about to do overpowered her.

He drew her to him. "How I've longed to kiss you —"

She pressed her lips to his and pressed the revolver to his breast. But Robbles, who was watching for some such action, shoved the muzzle from his body. The shot rang out and Robbles, making believe he was hit, twisted and kicked under her! "You've got me," he groaned.

She drew away from him and fired a second shot, this time at herself. The bullet grazed her left side and crashed into the wall above the head of a patient. "Monfort: see what I've done!" she cried, and fainted on the floor, as if dead.

The patients clung to their cots and stared wild-eyed at the body.

A grim look flashed in Robbles' eyes. "Monfort," he vowed, "you shall pay for this!"

On their way back from the gold tunnel May Barry and Monfort stopped in Roslyn for the rest of the company and then drove to the Roslyn-Cle Elum Hospital to invite Alma to spend the evening with them.

Who's going to call for her? Jean Benson asked, as the car drove up in front of the hospital door.

"Any one but Clyde," said Benson jokingly. "With his pessimistic view about women, he could never persuade her to be our guest tonight."

"I thought Mr. Clyde was tactful with ladies," said May.

"He is both tactful and watchful," added Monfort. "He is afraid to be trapped."

"We must find a way to outmaneuver our friend," said Benson, fishing for repartee.

"You can't be my friend if you try to trap me," Clyde replied.

"You talk like a hopeless celibate, Mr. Clyde," said May Barry.

"Mr. Clyde is against marriage," said Mrs. Benson.

"I wouldn't say that," Clyde replied. "In fact, I like to see everybody married — but myself. Let me ask you a question —"

"No, no," Benson interjected, raising a forbidding hand. "If you start with your questions I'm afraid we'll have to camp here for the night."

While Jean Benson and Monfort went into the hospital May asked the two men: "Why does Herbert talk so much about that woman?"

The two visitors were informed by a nurse that they could not see Alma, and the tone in which she spoke frightened Monfort. She gave him a letter and left. The message had been penned by Alma before her attempt at the double tragedy, and entrusted to the nurse for delivery.

Monfort trembled as he opened the envelope. The message read:

"I did it for you. Forgive me — Alma."

The paper fluttered from his fingers. "I have killed her — but why?"

Mrs. Benson looked at him amazed. "What — Alma dead —"

"Dead." His face darkened. It seemed to him that he had walked into the woods and had seen a fledgling fallen from its nest. He had picked it up and nursed it into life. "Now she is dead. The best part of me is gone."

"My God, she loved you?" Jean Benson cried. "Then I caused her death —"

"Even you. We all blunder and she blundered the most. She was thrown into a life that blunted her feeling for men. I took her out of that life and she thought I was the only man endowed with feeling. Her spirit was too refined. O death, you tread heavily upon us."

During the few minutes they spent obtaining permission to see Alma, Monfort wiped his forehead with a handkerchief ten times.

Upon learning that she was only resting, he rushed to her room.

He gathered her in his arms, his eyes moist. "What did you try to do, Alma? Had you died I would have been the most miserable of men."

"I was only in your way," She began to tell him she knew he loved another woman but he stopped her.

"Jean Benson just told me. It is all a mistake. I like Miss Barry, but you are everything to me."

For a moment all she could do was to look at him. A little color returned to her cheeks and her eyes brightened, but she could not speak. She could only stutter, "You — love — me?"

"You are the only woman I love."

"Oh, Herbert! That has been my hope and prayer. But I felt it was only pity you had for me."

"I knew something was wrong. Today I visited my old gold tunnel with Miss Barry, and all I could think of was you. Once I saw you standing before me with outstretched arms. I could not help feeling upset during the whole trip."

"That must been the moment when —" she paused, frightened by the scene that came to her mind. "What a

terrible thing I tried to do! I could not help myself. I fought against our love because it was your wish, but my love for you became so great, that I was unable to hold it back."

"You should have known how I felt about you."

"Deep within me I knew no one could love you as I did. I knew, or I thought I knew, our love was one. Then when I learned about May Barry I fainted, and when I came to myself I felt a deep void within me. The heaven I was living in had gone. There was nothing for me to live for — nothing worth while."

He pressed her to him and kissed her. Quite suddenly her face glowed and her blue eyes blinked and danced in a pool of what seemed liquid diamonds, while Monfort looked at her like a man devoid of speech. From the time he had caught his first glimpse of her, had heard her voice, he had loved her. But Monfort's life had been crowded with activities. Now he saw her as his inner self saw her. "There is so much beauty in you, Alma — I am not asking, but begging you to marry me."

When he left the song of life was deep in her heart.

### XXIII.

Three things were now marking events: The man, the means, and the time. The strike had not only disgusted the mine owners but had made it expensive for them. The three colliers and all their assets passed into Monfort's hands to the tune of three million and fifty thousand dollars.

News of the transaction traveled fast among the battle-scarred, stubborn miners and added force to their resisting spirit. To them it was a change in name only. Brown had donned whiskers and called himself Smith. It was a gesture, a machination. Why didn't the company come out and fight in the open?

"Because they were losing," said one.

"This is their last card," said another.

"They are licked."

"Sure they are licked."

"But suppose they really did sell to other interests?"

"Don't kid yourself."

"Who in hell would buy a camp crippled by strike?"

"But let's say they did."

"Say, man! What are you driving at? Are you thinking of joining the scabs?"

"Don't worry, I'll stick to our guns through thick and thin."

"I heard a big fellow, a fellow that means well, has a hand in it."

"Don't believe all you hear."

"If he is a big fellow he didn't get his millions by helping others. He got them by helping himself."

"That's right. That helping stuff sounds fishy."

"In the first place what's his name?"

"Don't know."

"Ha! ha!"

Out of many conjectures the miners drew two inferences: The company either had bluffed them or sold to powerful interests whose object was to crush the strike. The miners solidified their ranks.

Collier Number Six had suspended operation the day of the transaction. In the evening the new mine officials were going to submit their conditions to the men. Throughout the day the strikers agitated and mobilized. Forgetting their enmity for the slackers, they fraternized and sought their help. If they could put up a solid front that night they would stand a chance to get fair terms from the new management.

The sun had already sunk behind the mountains. On Main Street, between First and Second Avenue, there gathered a very large crowd of people. The whole of Roslyn seemed there. It was a grim, undaunted gathering await-

ing to make peace but on guard. It faced a platform raised considerably above the sidewalk, built there during the day for the occasion. In a moment the assembly became calm and looked closely at two strangers. One had a peculiar mustache and a cheery face; the other had thin lips, sharply chiseled nose, and penetrating eyes. The first was the chairman. In his introductory remarks he spoke deliberately and to the point, yet he gave the impression of being a better entertainer than a chairman. He introduced the man with the sharp nose. This man had a clear, even voice, and while governed by ability, he certainly did not open his speech in the business-like manner the occasion called for. He said:

"Human comfort lies in hypnotism. A baby is never as good, a grownup never as peaceful as when asleep. Twist him as you may, man will always be a plentigrade."

The crowd shifted uneasily and many scowled. What had this kind of blabbering to do with their troubles? "Listen," continued the speaker. "When man was still a nursling, nature created these mountains and stored in them a black treasure, and she said to herself: 'The coal shall be inherited by this babe when he is a man.' The babe grew into manhood but instead of coming into these fastnesses hand in hand and claiming his heritage, he came here to fret, fume, and fight." And in this strain Clyde kept puzzling his listeners with one phrase and stirring them with another but leaving them in the dark as to the matter under discussion.

Benson was obviously pleased with what Clyde said. Before introducing Monfort he remarked to the audience, "Mr. Clyde's speech may sound far-fetched. In fact, if I didn't know him, I would say it sounds fierce. In his way he has made plain the spirit that governs the terms about to be offered to you. Now, allow me to present the new owner of the Roslyn Mines." He motioned to Monfort, who stood among the listeners in the rear of the platform.

No sooner had Monfort stepped forward than something strange took place in the audience. The hard looks on the



sea of faces softened as if by magic. Some recognized Monfort. A shout went up and was followed by others. They were spontaneous, vibrant shouts. The man before them was Monfort, The Samaritan man! The acclamation caught fire. The noise was deafening. Benson faced the cheering crowd with both hands overhead and entreated them to be calm.

"Who is he?" some one demanded.

"It's Monfort!" a hundred voices cried together.

"We don't need to hear him speak," some shouted.

Others cried, "Whatever he says goes with us."

"Hurra!"

"We'll stand by his terms whatever they are!"

"Three cheers for Monfort!"

"Hurra! Hurra! Hurra!"

Again Benson had his hands in the air.

The enthusiasm died down like a loud, lingering echo.

Monfort swept his eyes over the audience and his face lit up. "The speaker preceding me told you that by natural right the mines belong to you. While the chairman said I own the mines, evidently my associates do not pull together."

"They are both right!" shouted a member of the audience.

"Hear, hear!" shouted another.

"The truth is," began Monfort in a matter-of-fact way, trying, as was his wont, to make his offering appear as modest as he could, "I bought the mines to exploit you, and get all I can out of you. The kind of success I am striving at being unconventional, the method I shall use will be unconventional, too. First, to put an end to rancor and war, I propose to make you all partners in this undertaking —"

A wave of irrepressible enthusiasm swept over the audience. Hats flew in the air; hundreds of handkerchiefs waved wildly. Even those who did not know what it was all about were carried away with the rest. Some whispered, some talked, others joined in chorus and drowned the tumult with hurrahs.

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Monfort lifted both hands in the air as Benson had done and waited until calm prevailed.

"Now," he continued, his voice full of emotion, "There is nothing extraordinary in what I am doing. You develop the mines, extract the mineral, freight it to distant cities, dump it into bins and furnaces. I have no reason to tamper with what you are earning. I am doing just a natural thing. . ."

It was a touching sight. The grim-visaged miners, proverbally tough, had assembled there with nerves on edge. Their foe, be it a lion or a wolf in sheepskin, they were ready to meet and challenge. Their foe turned out to be neither. His name was enough, and he won — won an army daunted neither by fear nor force.

## XXIV.

Roslyn became peaceful.

On week-day mornings the men in miners' garb, with dinner-pails in hand, drew towards the mountain-side and disappeared into three openings. Everybody was back to his job.

Pending new arrangements, the mines were operated on pre-strike scale. On this basis a good profit went into the hands of the new management.

What was to be done with the surplus?

The three men as well as the two women deliberated the question.

Mrs. Benson suggested raising the wages to a profit-absorbing level. This plan did not appeal to Monfort and Clyde.

"A good plan while it lasts," said Clyde, "but it would die with the exhaustion of the mines."

"That is the point we must keep in mind," Monfort agreed. "We must think of the future as well as the present, or our efforts will be meaningless in a few years."

May Barry suggested that the surplus be distributed to the families in need.

Monfort studied her with a condescending smile. He had never seen her weakening in her errands of mercy. She had misunderstood him about The Samaritan. Did she understand him now? he asked himself. Was not his new plan going to bring about a new humanity, was it not going to stop the need for charity. "May, you have an admirable weakness," he told her. "You reason too much from the heart."

Her suggestion, however, brought one good result. It set the group to thinking along that line. They proposed to use part of the surplus for building and maintaining a hospital in Roslyn — named after her.

Coal mines, like oil wells, become exhausted with time. While the region abounded with minerals, shafts had to be sunk, tunnels bored in order to get at the coal. That involved expense. Thus, in keeping with Monfort's object to give permanence to his undertaking, they mapped out plans to open a new mine north of Number Eight.

## XXV.

Monfort and his retinue moved to the Traveler Hotel in Roslyn.

One afternoon the three friends were standing at a corner of Main Street and Second Avenue when their attention was drawn to a big, tall fellow with a neatly trimmed beard and a well-kept mustache. The man was well-dressed and there was a dash about him such as one acquires in busy cities. He was obviously absorbed in thought, for he almost ran into them before he knew it. He stopped abruptly and fumbled in his pocket, as if he had forgotten something. Then he turned and walked back in the direction he had come. There was something strange about him. His gait had suddenly

become awkward and his arms hung down to his sides stiffly, as if they were artificial limbs.

After studying the stranger, Clyde turned to his companions and said, "Let us brush up on our study of human nature: there is food for us."

"He swung along easily enough before he saw us," Monfort observed. "Look at him now."

"Looks as if he were in a straight-jacket," added Benson.

Clyde's brows creased. "I have seen dromedaries on sandy deserts, but I have never seen one on his hind legs. Watch him closely. In a moment he will pretend to be looking into the store windows."

Clyde was correct. Somewhere in the middle of the block the man stopped before a window and peered in. At the same time he glanced at them from the corner of his eyes.

"Keep watching him," Clyde went on. "In another moment he will stop being a dromedary and slink around the corner like a fox."

Once more Clyde's prediction proved correct. Monfort and Benson were nonplussed. "How did you guess?"

"By astronomy."

"Astronomy?"

"By the position of the sun: foxes hate broad daylight. . . the drama is on."

Benson laughed. "It takes one grounded on Dutch mathematics to follow you."

"Come, now; don't you recognize him? He blackened your face and threatened Monfort and me."

Yes; the man was Robbles. And they knew he was maneuvering for a chance to get at them. The situation was not a pleasant one. They could have tried to smother his grievances with money, but that might be a dangerous step. Would their lives be safe with a Robbles at large?

What to do?

"Let him kill himself by his own hand." Clyde had done some rapid thinking.

"How?"

"With a double-dealer. A weapon that does not know its master."

"What kind of instrument is that?"

"A revolver that spits bullets on the person who handles it. Once I got to thinking that if I could invent a gadget that would help to exterminate the rats and the skunks, I would render a service both to the gods and man. So I got busy. The double-dealer looks like a common revolver but has a mouth at the rear of the barrel as well, and can shoot either forward or backward."

Monfort and Benson could see that such a weapon had its advantage, but how was it going to be placed in Robbles' hand at the proper time?

"Leave that to me," Clyde assured them. "I staged a play in which I broke his hip; this time I'll make him 'puncture his hide as sure as hell.' I am going to Seattle right now and get the trappings. When I get back we will rehearse. In the meantime, if you think life is worth living, keep out of his sight. We'll do plenty of walking when I get back tomorrow night."

The following day Clyde returned with a new trunk in the car.

In his apartment he pulled out three laminated steel apparatus and proceeded to fit his friends for the risky adventure. "Here, Benson," he said, presenting him with a suit of mail. "Put this outfit on and look like Porthos." He turned to Monfort with another steel suit. "And buckle this on, you D'Artagnan, and quit dreaming. You'll get more kick out of this play than the one we staged in Brenton or in the hospital. Frown like a musketeer."

Apparently Monfort was not carried away by Clyde's flamboyant talk. "We are forced into this bloody business. Let's get at it without ado."

"If we save a bat from drowning we are considered kind. Tonight we will save three lives."

On the other hand, Benson was not too pleased with his present. "So far I am still in the dark as to the part I am going to play. If you think I am going to parade in the streets with this jangling outfit on, I am afraid you are mistaken."

"I am glad to see that you are particular. But this suit will fit snugly under your clothes. Funny as it looks, when Robbles begins to pump bullets you will find it a handy thing to have on."

They put the devices on. Their clothes fitted tightly over them, so that they looked stiff and bloated, like stuffed scarecrows. Clyde whipped the double-dealer from his pocket and began his instructions, which were simple and brief. After Robbles had shot away at them without effect Benson was to say, "Ah, ah! You couldn't kill a bug with those cartridges." Clyde was to draw their victim's attention to the double-dealer and somehow let him have the chance to snatch it away.

Meanwhile across the street, Robbles had for two hours kept a vigilant eye on the hotel door. To make himself less conspicuous, he drifted along with the passing crowd. Sometimes he stopped under a street light and pretended to read a newspaper. Calm as he appeared to be, within a short time he had smoked a package of cigarettes.

Once out of the hotel they did not need to display themselves to get his attention. They struck west and slowly walked out of town. A hundred yards behind the fellow stalked them light-footed.

Beyond the outskirts of the town they still kept on, now tramping over a dusty road, guided by the glimmer of the new moon that hung low over the Cascade Mountains.

Finally Robbles passed them at a quick clip, then turned suddenly and faced them with a shining revolver. He ordered them to put their hands up. Monfort was in the middle, Benson to the left, and Clyde to the right of him, some three feet from one another. They raised their hands



as high as they could but, being handicapped by the steel armor which pressed down upon their shoulder-joints, they could only raise them half way, each arm describing an L. They looked like three Egyptian dancers.

"Look at me, you mummies!" he shouted, brandishing the revolver with one hand, with the other tearing the whiskers off his face. "You think you're wise? Who'll I plug first?"

"It's Robbles, the tinhorn gambler!" shouted Benson, as if surprise.

"You clown — I'll plug you first —"

"Listen, Robbles," Monfort interrupted, "you are on the brink of hell."

"I'd like to kill you most. 'I'll shoot you first —"

"Shoot me first," Clyde yelled. "The quicker you get out of my sight the better."

"I'll shoot you twice," he snapped, and let go three shots. Ready for further action, he watched his victims. They were still posing like oriental dancers. Robbles was angry. "What! They don't fall?" He pulled the trigger trice again. None fell. "Hell!" he shouted, staring. "What am I shooting at — goblins?"

"No," sang out Benson, "you're shooting punk cartridges. Tricked again, ha, ha, ha!"

A laugh froze Robbles' face and a chill ran through his bulky frame.

Clyde stepped close to him with the treacherous weapon in hand. "Now — you put them up! There's enough bullets in this to knock you down eight times. If you have nine lives you're safe. Anything to say before I give you the works?" Turning to his companions and laughing abominably, he said, "You dummies, anything to say? Who shall I shoot first?" Quick as a cat, Robbles snatched the double-dealer, bounded back, levelled the gun at Clyde and yelled, "Damn you wise guy!" A shot rang out, the bullet boring its way through Robbles' chest. His arms dropped to his

sides, the double-dealer slid from his limp fingers; the mark of death was on his face.

A sense of horror came over Clyde as he looked at the doomed man. "You can't say we did it."

"I'm done — "

Monfort felt worse than Clyde. "You drove us to this. We did all we could to help you."

"That's what you say!" He grimaced at Monfort as he staggered.

"We would have been glad to help you."

The knees sagged under him. He stared at Monfort lividly. "You — you — mean it?" He slumped to the ground.

"Did you hear that, Clyde?"

Clyde shook his head hopelessly. "He passed away like a fool. Now that he's dead I can only pity him."

"Did you see that look on his face?"

"Don't trouble your soul, Monfort; you're seeing things," Clyde assured him.

"Well — he died like a man — Robbles?" He bent over and tried to lift him, but his comrades pulled him back.

"You're wrong," Benson remonstrated. "But for this armor we would be lying in his place. The bullets rammed against my chest like fist-blows."

"Why sympathy for such a man?" Clyde went on. "Let's go — I hate to laugh at corpses."

They took off their armor and returned to Roslyn.

## XXVI.

Roslyn was crowded with strangers. Some were tourists on their way to Lake Cle Elum and its picturesque surroundings; most were miners who, drawn by the new events, were looking for jobs. But there were no available jobs since every post in the Monfort mines was taken.

The miners now had steady work and were not only get-

ting along fine, but the feeling that they were working for themselves had a good effect. Roslyn was rapidly heading towards the same mental atmosphere that the brief existence of The Samaritan had shown in Seattle.

And because they were doing well, the Ronald miners, a settlement a few miles north of Roslyn, and also the Cle Elum miners, became discontent. "Our neighbors fare better than we do because they are just lucky," they grumbled. "Before Monfort went there they were not bragging much. They had strikes, and they never knew when they were going to lose their jobs." A group of them cited the system in Roslyn as a basis on which the mines they were working should be operated. Naturally that was out of question.

Finally the Ronald and Cle Elum miners became disgusted with their lot. They struck in unison, asking for a raise in wages equivalent to the earnings of the Roslyn miners.

One month later the strikers and the mine owners were still at war with each other. The strikers called upon the Roslyn miners to go on a sympathetic strike. This, they reasoned, would strengthen the strikers' morale and cause a coal shortage, thus forcing the issue into the hands of the authorities.

Of course such a step would have marred Monfort's progress. "My success will eventually be your success," he told them.

The embattled miners as a whole understood him, but the strife continued with unabated strength and assumed an ugly turn.

That Monfort's operation in Roslyn was based on unselfish motives was beyond question, yet he was challenged. Professional speakers appeared in Cle Elum and Ronald. They were good talkers and, however far from looking like underground workers, they seemed to be deeply interested in the strikers' cause. In Cle Elum these newcomers had the habit of pointing emphatically to the north, and in

Ronald they flung their accusing, soft hands towards the south. (Roslyn is between these two towns.)

"The Roslyn miners talked a great deal about improving your lot, did they?" said these glib speakers. "They affected friendship for you. They filled you with discontent, so you struck. What do they do now? Do they go on strike with you? Do they take you in when you apply for a job there? You bet they don't!"

While these remarks were not inaccurate, they were so twisted and garbled that the listeners could not help feeling bitter towards their thriving neighbors.

Some did not like these newcomers and warned their fellow strikers to watch out for them. "Our grievances," they argued, "are between our employers and ourselves. Anyone who tries to shut out that fact is not our friend: he is a stool-pigeon."

"Keep that slur for Monfort," the speakers retorted. "Why doesn't he close his mines? Do you expect to win the strike while he is flooding the market with coal?"

"Our company don't profit by it either," replied one suspicious miner.

"How do you know that? How do you know whether Monfort is eating off the same plate as your bosses or not? Don't judge the man by his talk. He is too slick for us. You can gamble on that. That is why they drove him away from Seattle. He can pull the wool over our eyes any time. If we can't see that, fellow workers, then we need goggles!"

Monfort was fast slipping from the confidence of the disgruntled miners. "That's right," they thought. "If he is our friend why doesn't he come out and show it? Now is the time!"

The glib speakers persisted: "Those of you who think so much of the man, try this out on him. Say, 'Since you profess to be on our side, close up your mines.' And watch him squirm. Say to him, 'If you don't close them then look out. We may lose our good-hearted patience. We know how

to handle dynamite and we may try our hands at disabling your mines.' And watch him scowl at your words."

The strikers fell under their influence, and one of them, Brestlow, was worked into a fury. This fellow was known in Cle Elum as the miners' silent watchman, a character dominated by impulse rather than reason. From the time he began to listen to the newcomers he turned against Monfort. His heart pounding, his twisted brain prey to a wild spirit, he saw in Monfort a traitor. Ugly resolves began to hatch in his morbid mind.

The Roslyn people, to say the least, were surprised at the way things were taking shape among their striking neighbors. Nor were Monfort and his colleagues in the best of moods. For a time Monfort and Benson kept up a hopeful attitude, and Clyde confined himself to rambling imprecation. But the situation was rapidly telling on him. The defeat of The Samaritan had deepened his pessimism; the present troubles engulfed him. "Blessed are the fools, for they neither feel nor see," was now his favorite strain of invective. The tip of his aquiline nose had drawn closer over his acerbic mouth. "Sore will be the trimmers, for they shall inherit this puffy ball of mud we call the earth."

"Anyway," concurred Benson, "this is a fine time for left-hand compliments. Here we are, trying to do some good in the world, and we are threatened."

"Honest to God," said Jean Benson, in despair, "if they come here to make trouble, I'll be the first one to shoot at them. Why don't they stay in their own towns?"

"Why — " shouted Clyde, the blood rushing to his brain.

"Why don't they fight and blow up things where they are? — if that's what they want to do?" she added.

Clyde rose hastily from his chair and cast a disconcerted glance at his friends. "Why?" he repeated, as if challenging them. "Why do we laugh when a child is born? Why does the bird eat the worm and the worm eat the bird? and why not? Who can disprove the law of chaos on this planet

of nightmares? Life is a game of bunk and only the dull ones can play it and laugh!"

His friends looked at one another with alarm. They were struck by the sudden pallor on Clyde's face and by the unusual stare in his eyes.

"Your way of thinking," May Barry warned him, "will make you sick."

"Clyde is magnifying things," Monfort commented, unruffled. "The danger that is threatening us now will blow over when we hold the meeting. Nothing could favor us more than the chance to answer these intriguers. (Monfort and his followers had arranged for a public meeting in Cle Elum where they could counter the charges the glib speakers had made against them.) As an object is attracted to another by gravity, so is thought attracted to the power of truth. Do not deceive yourself, Clyde. There is a power in the universe that operates for good. Sooner or later the wrong is always condemned by the law of common sense."

Clyde glared at him. "The philosophy of a dreamer!" he cried. "You created a child in Seattle. You took it before the court. You stripped it naked so anyone could see it was a beautiful child. The Prosecuting Attorney tore it from your arms, twisted his fingers around its neck, and throttled it. 'Unfit!' he said. And your child was doomed."

"That's correct," said Benson. "It was worse than murder."

"Yet this happened in the twentieth century." Clyde turned to Monfort. "Why did it happen? Your position was so clear, even a blind man could see it. Had you had your way you would have developed a civilization there that would have dazzled the world! How did the truth work there?"

The question had teeth. Monfort could not find a suitable answer. It was true; his child had suffered an ignoble fate. "I must yield to you there, Clyde. Do not forget, however, that you cannot put down an army of facts with

a well-aimed blow. You have cited an instance which hurts but does not budge me from my view."

Clyde looked blankly at Monfort and drawled, as if speaking to himself, "Oh, yes; when we meet those blatant orators we will fondle our long, musty beards and say to them, 'Too bad you are wrong.' Those rats — I'll fill them with lead!" he shouted, swinging a fist in the air. The group stared at him. "Don't look at me like that. I know what I am saying. The lead I'll make them swallow is the maggots that crawl in my weary brain."

## XXVII.

Going back to the closing of The Samaritan, there comes to mind a prominent Seattle citizen named Mobert — a man who, more than anybody else, had contributed to the defeat of Monfort's work. The office he was fulfilling and his ambition goaded him to it. In court once he heard within himself a voice: "My conscience weeps, Monfort, while my brain sharpens its teeth to crunch you." And he crunched him.

The day after the trial the fire with which he had fought the case had cooled off. He did not go out in the streets or visit his clubs and receive the plaudit of his friends. He remained in his elaborate home on Capitol Hill. He was tired, exhausted. The fact is, there was a twist in his conscience, there were thorns in his freshly won laurels, and those thorns bit at his brows.

The state election came shortly after The Samaritan trial. Mobert was chosen as candidate for Governor, but refused to run.

He had followed, through the newspapers, the Arcadia project; now he was keenly interested in the developments in Roslyn.

He was so thoroughly convinced that Monfort was doing great things that he wished he could shake the past from his

memory: he wished he had a chance to humiliate himself before the man he had wronged.

He boarded a train bound for Cle Elum but alighted at Ravensdale. At the moment he craved solitude more than anything else and the little mining town, surrounded by deep woods and mountains, offered quiet. As the train pulled out Mobert struck off in a northwest direction where the country looked more wooded and wild.

A man troubled with conflicting emotions, he walked for miles through deep forests; and all the while he thought about Monfort. Phrases that he had heard him utter at the trial leaped to his mind. Silence was all about him, yet he was in turmoil. Once he stopped abruptly and shouted, "Monfort, I have dealt you a foul blow!" The sound of his voice awakened him to his senses. "Confound it!" he said. "I come here for peace of mind; instead I get excited."

He walked on, winding through growths of vine and shrubbery, under a roof of fir and hemlock branches through which filtered dull golden beams. Night was falling fast and now, going up a mountainside, he still kept on his quest for solitude. By the time he reached the summit the sun had gone for the day, and down in the lowlands darkness began to thicken. For a moment he thought it was strange he had chosen to spend the night on that high peak, but that day he had given free reign to his conscience, and his conscience wanted solitude.

Gradually the night crept up the mountainside, until he could see only a world of darkness below and above a sea of stars. He had never seen the firmament so lit up and so immense. Some luminaries seemed so close, he imagined he could reach them with a step-ladder; others twinkled steadily and varied from one another in hue and brilliancy. The sight was overwhelming, drowning his conscious self. Silently, humbly he kept looking up, lost in space. He recalled the time when he was denouncing Monfort with fiery words and how Monfort smiled at him. That smile haunted him. "I



was great in the eyes of the many but I was small in yours," he thought, and he felt all that as he looked up at the stars. How solemn was the night! He stretched himself under a dwarf black pine, tired from the day's journey. Finally sleep overcame him while he was struggling to keep his eyes open on the rhythmic stars that shone like diamonds through the dwarf branches.

In the morning he resumed his march, a wandering penitent. During the day he wandered on, seeping in the balm of solitude; at night he sought rest at auto-courts or inns along the road. At length he reached Arcadia, unshaven, his shoes battered and bruised, and his broadcloth suit dusty and torn. But he was in good spirits.

One afternoon May Barry started on a trip to Seattle. On her way she stopped in Brenton to linger a while with her "step-child."

Brenton, changed from a cluster of log-houses to a stormy railroad camp, now looked like a neat little town in the making.

On the street she met a man who bared his head to her and uttered her name with surprise.

May did not recognize him. In fact, she guessed the stranger was a tramp. "Can I do anything for you?" she asked, fumbling in her purse for a piece of money.

"Thanks, I am not broke yet, May," said Mobert, laughing through his stubby whiskers.

"Your voice sounds familiar." She closed her purse and studied him.

"Ellis — "

"Ellis Mobert? — amazing! You look like some of the tramps I used to help in Seattle. What happened to you? You look like a ragamuffin!"

"These rags become me."

"Ellis! What do you mean?" She searched his eyes in an effort to understand him.

"It's a long story. I can't even begin to explain."

"And of all places, you here in Arcadia?"

"I am on my way to Roslyn to see Monfort."

"I am really surprised."

"Are you familiar with what he is doing in these parts?"

"Quite familiar: I am a member of his staff."

"A member of his staff? How surprising! I thought your romance with him was broken."

"Mine is a long story, too." May Barry was glad to have met a friend to whom she could reveal her overflowing heart.

They had lunch, then started on the trail winding up to Point Conception.

Step by step, while she unfolded the romance of Monfort and Alma as she knew it, they arrived at the hemlock tree.

MoBERT had all he could do to convince himself he was not dreaming.

"I know it is difficult to understand," she agreed. "At first I hated the woman. When I came to know her, I admired her."

"Even after she had told you that she loved him?"

"Yes."

"Very strange. May I ask a personal question — did you ever really care for him?"

"Of course I did. And I care for him now."

"Did Alma ever attempt — I mean in a subtle way — to rouse in you dislike for Monfort?"

She shook her head.

MoBERT drew back to have a better perspective of her face. "You say your bitter feeling for her gradually left you. Can you piece this transition together in your mind? Did she ever convey the thought that —"

She interrupted him with a smile. "It was her spirit that impressed me!"

MoBERT could not ascribe so much virtue to a woman

whose past was not too smooth. He began to finger his watch-chain, as he often did in deep thought. "Of course your dislike for her did not weaken until she begged for your sympathy."

"My dear lawyer, you are too practical in this case." Her eyes sparkled. "She did not beg. She told her story without a gesture. Her words were like music — music that draws you to it. I saw in her what I lacked in the hectic days of The Samaritan — an ideal. There is the whole case for you. I lacked the ideal and Herbert was carried away with it. He had visions, I was chained to old ideas. My very soul was chained to them. He acted like a man. The more I think about it, the deeper is my admiration for him, and I am honestly glad he is loved by such a fine woman as Alma —"

"It's really remarkable the way you put it, but —"

"But — you do not understand? Alma from the depths, Herbert from the heights, each struggling to repel the other, even by force. And in spite of it all, their love grew, became greater than themselves! Certainly you must understand. People are great not by what they possess but for what they are. You say that for days you have been tramping over forests and mountains, you wear rags to despise yourself, and you do not understand? Why do you do that?"

"Lately that troubled soul of mine mistrusts my way of looking at life. It seems as if the metal in me has turned into strange elements."

She placed a sympathetic hand on his. "Go ahead, tell me."

He readjusted his position on the pine-needles and rubbed a hand over his protruding, itching beard. "I accused Monfort of interfering with private enterprise, yet his was nothing more than a private enterprise. I assailed his character from all the angles I could think of. He was a plotter scheming to bring ruin to our city; a blind follower of outlandish theories; a ruthless monopolist; unpatriotic; a man without feeling, and other charges such as are dished out by

cheap politicians. I knew he was nothing of the kind but I was there to convict him. In short, I refused to see the situation in its true light.

"When the trial came to an end, I went over the transcript, studied Monfort's speech when he closed The Samaritan, and the one he and his two friends made to the Roslyn miners, and I had a long discussion with Professor Simons. It dawned upon me that there was a great idea behind The Samaritan."

"Indeed — " She nodded and closed her eyes for a second as if from pain. "A spiritual child."

"You see," continued Moberg, looking at her drawn face, "with Monfort some men are better than others but they are all basically good. If one is not, it is because he is handicapped directly or indirectly by economic conditions. Thus his plan is to bring the good out of man by relieving him of unnecessary economic pressure. When no longer chained to the struggle for existence, his spirit will rise to higher levels. That is Monfort's conviction. If he had had his way, he would have assembled all the industries, freed man from his daily problems, and the result would have been amazing. Within a period of twenty years, I venture to say, he would have developed in our city a civilization head and shoulders above the present one."

"Ellis! Why — that is just the way Herbert would say it!" she exclaimed.

He kept on with tensed brows. "Once one is fixed in a given groove it is hard to get out of it. The forces of selfishness and stagnant thinking stopped Monfort, and I was the embodiment of those forces. . . I feel like a stranger to myself."

A thrill came over her. "We are like two new-born babes!" She kissed him before she became aware of her action. "I know how you must feel. I, too, have taken stock of myself — a sort of house-cleaning, discarding dust-

gathering relics, resetting the furniture. By the time I was through I hardly knew my house any more."

Mobert touched the spot she had kissed with the tips of his fingers. "And we came here by the same way."

Both were members of the Seattle Country Club. They had played golf, danced together, and had been good friends for many years.

"It looks more like a dream. Came here by the same way — and with the girl I have always admired."

She felt his eyes upon her. She relaxed, a sitter posing for a natural photograph, and let her eyes wander over Arcadia — down below them — a fertile garden miles long, studded with new homes and set in a massive frame of rugged green mountains. "Isn't it a wonderful sight?"

"Just now I can only think of the girl beside me." His dusty face softened.

"And not before?"

"Always. But the time — "

"I know. You were too eager to make an impression upon the world. You had no time for romance. Isn't it wonderful: together under this hemlock tree — here where their love began!"

"And should we say our own, too. I love you, May."

"I have always liked you, Ellis — always. But after what you have done with yourself, I care for you still more."

"Then will you marry me?"

"My heart is so full of love I can't even think. I wish life could always be like this." She leaned to him, brought her lips to his. The wiry hair bit into her soft skin, but she did not feel it. "Let us wait at least six months for the answer."

May Barry had planned to go to Seattle for a short visit, then return to Roslyn to look after the hospital. "Do you intend to stay in these parts?" she asked him.

"If I can be of service to Monfort, I will."

The Cle Elum mass meeting came to her mind. "Perhaps — I have a feeling you will have that chance tonight. God

knows what is going to happen at that meeting. I'll go with you! I'll telephone my parents not to wait."

By the time they reached Cle Elum it was late. May Barry telephoned her parents, then telephoned Monfort about Mobert. For a moment there was utter silence over the wires. "I know it sounds incredible," she broke in. "I am amazed, too — and thrilled — thrilled for you especially, but the time is too short to talk about it now. The meeting will be on by the time we can get there. You must have him address the miners, too. Imagine what a sensation it will be!"

In the mean time Mobert went into a barber shop. While he was getting shaved a number of patrons, some under the barber's hands, others waiting for their turn, were talking about the meeting. Mobert listened but kept his peace until a man, answering a Monfort sympathizer, remarked, "Why in hell was he driven from Seattle then? When the big population there says the man is no good, that's enough for me."

"That don't prove anything. Tell me the facts, why he is no good," insisted the sympathizer.

"Facts! Didn't Mobert pile up the facts?"

"You show me those facts."

"You people make me sick! Didn't he have to get out of town? Didn't Mobert say he was a plotter, a foxy schemer?"

Mobert looked at him fiercely and said, "Sir, how do you suppose Mobert felt after the trial?"

Everybody looked at the stranger who, though poorly dressed, looked like an intellectual man. None answered him.

## XXVIII.

That day a gusty wind, not an infrequent visitor in that belt, swept down vigorously from the north, shaking the trees in Cle Elum and raising an annoying dust; but it began to abate as the sun lowered over the Cascade Mountains,

and died down by dusk. The meeting was held in the open, in the main part of the town. A large platform many feet high had been built to accommodate a speaker's stand and some fifteen or twenty chairs.

Most of the people from Brenton, Ronald, Roslyn, and Cle Elum were on hand.

In his introductory remarks Benson said: "Some of you must be aware by now that we have a weakness for outdoor meetings. We have a good reason. We knew the largest hall in town would not have been big enough for the occasion. We felt that what we will say here tonight concerns you all. Therefore, we want you, the people, to hear us and be our judges. We are here to answer the charges made against the Roslyn miners and management, and I am glad to see the two gentlemen present who have been most active against us." He bowed slightly toward the neatly dressed men who were immediately in front of the rostrum. "At the end of the meeting they and, of course, anybody else will be given the opportunity to make a three minute speech and ask questions. If we can bring about better understanding this meeting will have accomplished its purpose. The first speaker, Mr. Clyde, will talk on general principles. Mr. Monfort will follow with specific details about our stand. Mr. Clyde."

In the meantime Mobert and May Barry made their way to the side of the platform. Mobert, clean shaven, his hand clasping hers, looked hard at the two familiar faces close to the rostrum. "What are those fellows doing here?" he whispered in a strained voice.

"They are the ones who have done most of the agitation against us," she replied.

His face suddenly became tense but she was too busy beckoning Monfort to notice it. They wound their way back of the platform where they met Monfort, unobserved by the gathering. The two men silently eyed each other, each studying the other's face.

Finally Mobert spoke as if in defiance. "I have done you wrong, Monfort. Here I am, strike back at me!"

"It is beneath my dignity to strike back."

"Ah," said Mobert. "You do not stoop to man's small ways. I have been your enemy. Tonight I shall be your friend, if you let me."

Monfort half smiled and extended a hand to his former adversary. "Some die without a soul sooner than humble themselves. If you are convinced you were wrong, you cannot do more than right yourself."

As Clyde stepped forward to deliver his "sermon," applause filled the air. May Barry joined Alma and Jean Benson in a car parked on the outer rim of the crowd, and the two men took seats side by side on the platform.

Clyde faced the cheering audience with a scowl. He cared little for display. He was spiritually sick — sick of himself, of his fellowmen. A glimpse into his mind would have shown a bitter struggle going on — realism and idealism at each other's throat, the former throttling the other. Clyde and Monfort were as one in their idealism, but Monfort was conscious that man moves slowly. The average millionaire and the average worker are too busy, one in making dollars, the other in making a living, to think of anything else. The rest tackle social problems tug-of-war fashion: The harder one side pulls, the tougher will be the opposition. But from the depths of his patient soul he was also convinced that the good will win out. On the other hand, Clyde attributed to the masses the vision and the will he himself possessed. When this failed to materialize in the miners as well as in Seattle, his spirit was suffocated. He faced the audience, pale, embittered, and his overshining eyes focussing nowhere. He began:

"I should consider myself old-fashioned were I to perform sleight-of-hand tricks. The modern magicians are the ones with big lungs and a glib tongue. With these assets they can distort your reason and hypnotize you. They can fool you



all the time, these crack salesmen. When their old tricks are known they invent new ones." He paused and gulped. He was visibly choked with feeling. The audience was tense. "You were our friends. You knew it would have been unwise of us to go on strike with you. Not only did you admire Monfort's enterprise in Roslyn, but you prayed for its success. Then — then came the magicians —" A medley of hisses and applause interrupted him. He ran his eyes up and down the audience and his attention riveted upon a sinister-looking fellow who stood immediately before the rostrum. He was as motionless as a post, the corners of his mouth tightening into a weird curl and his wild eyes set upon Clyde. At a glance Clyde knew that that eye-sore was a fanatic. He turned his attention to the audience and went on: "Monfort had gained your respect. Then came the salesmen with big lungs, glib tongues, and bags of nostrums. You swallowed their pills. They said Monfort was a schemer and you repeated the lie. Lincoln was labelled a bum, and gullible ones said the same thing. Christ was labelled a trouble-maker and the blabbers got rid of him. So with Socrates, so with anyone who loves mankind too much.

"Monfort had gained your confidence. Then came the blatant salesmen and you saw in Monfort a black devil. Had you done this country into utter oblivion you would have committed a lesser crime —" A shot rang out. The man with the curled lips held a smoking revolver in his hand. Clyde collapsed on the platform, a hand pressed against his breast.

For a moment everybody was stunned except the few men overpowering the crazed Brestlow. Clyde staggered to his feet. "You wanted to wage war against the Roslyn miners — you —" There was a rattling in his voice and his eyes were blurred, yet his spirit fought on. "You are like jaguars, you use claws for arguments. Kings have clowns, men have guns to toy with. Go ahead —" He turned to Monfort and

Benson, who had rushed to his support. "Ah, this is painful — I must leave you."

In deep sorrow the two friends held to him. He stretched a white, trembling hand toward the audience. "Speak to them — speak —" he gasped.

Monfort faltered, "If tears were words, Clyde, I could speak."

The words had barely left Monfort's lips when Mobert, a dramatic figure, stood before the audience and faced it as Clyde would have faced it. In a commanding voice he urged the listeners, who were now in commotion, to be quiet. "Monfort stands trial before you. Beset as we are by this tragedy, you must hear me before you pass judgment—"

"Clyde, listen — your speech —", Monfort entreated hopelessly, while his friend was sinking in his arms, pulling him down. "If there are gods their hearts must bleed over this crime."

Benson was as sorrowful as Monfort. "If they had power over man this would never have happened. I know now how it feels to be stabbed in the heart."

Clyde was carried to the ambulance and rushed to the hospital. Monfort, Benson, and the three women hurried there, too, hoping against hope — Clyde was gone.

Another shock awaited the gathering. The moment Mobert announced he was the district attorney who had prosecuted Monfort, so deep was the silence that a pin could have been heard to drop. After what had happened, only a man in Mobert's position could have held the assembly together.

In a throbbing voice he told them they were committing the same blunder he himself had committed. "I was blind, blind like my advisers and backers. We voiced our spleen against an efficient force that overwhelmed our way of life. We accused Monfort of everything under the sun. We would have accused him of being a trilobite had the community believed it. Those of us with economic prestige sat

warm by our old firesides: when too warm on one side we turned the other side. We were not going to allow a Monfort to tamper with our comfortable way of life. Monfort planned to modernize and expand our fireside so as to make room for everybody, but some of us refused to see it his way and others were unable to understand him."

He must have been well understood, for he was greeted with long, heavy applause.

He continued: "That was the situation in Seattle. And now a striking parallel is facing you. In the course of time Monfort's good work here would make a heaven out of your strike-tossed country. Why are you set against the man? At this point allow me to put a question to you: Monfort's ultimate goal is to get possession of all the neighboring mines and run them on the basis the Roslyn mines are now operating. Are you in favor of it?"

A deafening "Yes" broke out from the miners and spread far and wide over the slumbering mountains.

Accustomed to face big audiences as Mobert was, he had never felt the blood surging in his veins as it did at that moment. When he posed the same question again few "noes" were heard. Silence fell over the tumult and was broken by a number of voices demanding that the two men be questioned.

Mobert replied, "I shall be glad to do that if you promise to remain quiet." As the listeners gave their assurance Mobert once more eyed the two men and compressed his lips. Judging by the pallor on their faces the two men would have liked to slink away; but there was no alternative for them.

"Before I proceed I must acquaint the audience with the following facts: These two gentlemen are well known to me. They were hired by the so-called public league and were each paid twenty-five dollars a day to concoct plots against The Samaritan. One of their schemes was to plant in Monfort's office a dashing blonde stenographer and a candid camera.

This was discouraged because it was too old a trick. Another was to send Monfort letters accusing one clerk of being uncivil or a thief, another clerk of being a saboteur or having a criminal record. This scheme was used over and over. Hand-written and typed letters, some scrawled, others badly worded, were mailed to The Samaritan; but they failed to achieve their purpose. The league finally received a bundle of these letters with a note reading: 'We find the information in these letters of no value to us. What we want is the record of your league's members.' The note was signed by a man who at this moment fills us with too much sorrow to mention his name."

He turned to the two men. "Since it is obvious that your activities in these parts, as in Seattle, are governed by mercenary motives, the first question I want to ask is: Who pays for your speeches?"

"We refuse to answer —" they began when the miners, the gleam of anger in their eyes, shouted, "Make them answer! Put 'em on the platform!"

"This meeting has been prejudiced against us. We refuse —" Their voices were drowned in the mounting clamor. "Put 'em on the platform — we want an answer!"

The miners around the two men pressed against them so that they could not escape.

Mobert began to feel uneasy. "You have faced this public before. Why not face it now?"

"Because —" That was the only word heard. Wrathful shouts followed and anger was reaching a boiling point in the tight ring of miners around the stool-pigeons.

Mobert quickly raised his hands overhead. "You promised to be fair. You must stick to your promise. Their refusal to answer speaks for itself. Let them go."

The two men pushed their way out as fast as they could. Once out of the crowd they began to run, but some tough miners were too fast for them. Fitful shouts of murder

filled the night air, and the following morning the men were in the hospital with broken noses and cracked ribs.

Monfort's work was accomplished. With Alma and the Bensons he left for Seattle, leaving May Barry behind to supervise her hospital, and Moberg to look after the mines, and to argue, with damaging effect, against the six-month sentence May Barry had imposed upon herself.

The party drove to Cle Elum, swung to the right, and passed through Arcadia — a wide belt of open country surrounded by massive, wooded slopes. New homes glittered in the bright morning sun, and the land, cleared only a while back, was now throbbing with budding life. Alfalfa, hay, and low orchard growth mantled the land. As they drove along Monfort remembered the time when he had caught the vision, when looking down from Point Conception he had seen a wilderness turned into Eden. The vision had become a reality. His eyes sparkled, his face was radiant. It was a moment when his feelings were too deep to fathom. Beside him was Alma. His accomplishment was great, and so was hers.

